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THE
LADY OF THE BEDCHAMBER.

A NOVEL.

BY MRS. A. CRAWFORD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

“Compell’d to wed, because she was my ward,
Her soul was absent when she gave her hand.”

DRYDEN.

E. Mockler

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THE LADY OF THE BED-CHAMBER.

CHAPTER I.

Here, take her hand,
 Proud, scornful boy, unworthy this good gift ;
 That does in vile misprision shackle up
 My love and her desert ; that canst not dream,
 We poizing us in her defective scale,
 Shall weigh thee to the beam ; that wilt not know
 It is in us to plant thine honour where
 We please to have it grow.

Shakspeare.

It was in the year 1668 that Louis the Fourteenth, after having attacked in person and taken Tourney, Oudenard, Alost, &c., found himself before the city of Lille, the most

VOL. I.

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flourishing and best fortified of all the towns in Flanders. The Spanish General had assembled about eight-thousand men with the intention, if possible, of throwing succours into Lille, and the King detached the Marquis de Crequi and the Marquis de Bellefonds to attack them, whilst he himself carried on the siege with redoubled vigour.

Brave and reckless of danger he exposed his person to all the risks of war, undergoing the same perils as the meanest of his soldiers, and would have inevitably been killed in a sally made by the besieged, grown desperate from their danger, had not the Chevalier de Valcour, who happened to be near him at the time, thrown himself before the sword raised by one of the officers of the besieged party against his beloved sovereign, and received in his own breast the deadly wound intended for that of Louis. His Sovereign was saved, and Lille was taken, but the brave De Valcour only lingered till the following day, having be-

queathed to his grateful Sovereign, who stood beside his dying bed, the care of an only child, a daughter, who, as her father, though descended from a long line of ancestors had received from them scarcely any inheritance but his good sword, and a noble and unblemished name, would now be left, on his demise, a portionless orphan.

After many other victories, so easily achieved that this campaign seemed almost an excursion of pleasure, Louis returned triumphantly to Paris. His first care was now to make inquiries about the daughter of the Chevalier de Valcour, and finding that she was in the Convent of St. Agnes, situated in one of the valleys at the foot of Pyrenees, he determined to place her immediately among the maids of honour attendant on the Queen, and despatched forthwith a *gouvernante*, and an armed troop to escort her to Paris.

Isabelle Agnes de Valcour was at this period in her nineteenth year, rather above the middle

height and finely formed, her deportment was graceful and dignified though withal simple and *naïve*. Her beauty was of that kind which might be strictly termed classical, a regular Grecian outline of feature with a skin dazzlingly fair, soft dark brown eyes with long black lashes, and pencilled eye-brows, and a colour ever varying on the slightest emotion, like the rosy tint that flits and fades in the summer evening sky. For the last three or four years of her life she had considered herself as destined eventually for the cloister, and this new change was to her as surprising as unwished for.

The Convent of St. Agnes was placed amidst the most magnificent scenery of nature in a small valley on the banks of a clear stream not many miles distant from the town of Argelès. An immense barrier of mountains opening now and then into similarly verdant vales, seemed to surround this valley on every side, while furious torrents dashed from tremendous heights into the abysses beneath these precipices, flow-

ing, some in clear rivulets over a pebbly bed, others rushing impetuously through the deep glens. In this Convent the days of Isabelle had, previous to the death of her beloved father, glided away in peaceful tranquillity and happy usefulness amidst the good nuns who resided within its walls, and the simple and grateful peasantry, who surrounded them ; and now, at this period, with her cheeks still wet with tears for her recent loss, and a mind more than ever weaned from every worldly care, the startled maiden heard with a sensation bordering on terror, that she must prepare immediately to leave these, her dearly beloved friends and instructors, the wild grandeur of nature, and the solitude so consonant to her feelings, in order to mingle with the gay and noble of the land. She looked upon the lofty mountains which enclosed this valley where most part of her life had been spent, and she wept and wished they had formed a more secure barrier around the Convent.

Among these scenes had she received her earliest impressions, for her father, whose only inheritance was a dilapidated chateau and a small tract of mountainous land in the neighbourhood, had placed her, on the death of his beloved wife, which occurred a few years after the birth of Isabelle, in the care of the good Abbess of the Convent, and devoting himself entirely to the profession of arms, paid a hurried visit to his child whenever the toils of duty permitted him to do so. Once he had a vision of wealth and splendour for Isabelle; but in this, as in many other of his hopes, he was doomed to be disappointed. His only sister who had been a great beauty and was, early in life, married to a Venetian nobleman, on the death of her husband, having no children of her own, professed her intention of adopting her niece, who was therefore, at the age of twelve years old, conducted to Venice by her father.

The Marchesa Loredan affectionately em-

braced her brother and her beautiful niece, promising ever to regard the latter as her own child, and lavishing on her the tenderest marks of a mother's love.

After remaining a few weeks with his sister the Chevalier de Valcour left Venice happy in having found in her a second mother for his beloved child.

Isabelle passed her hours in nearly as great retirement in the Palazzo of the Loredan as she had done in the Convent of St. Agnes. Her aunt wished her for a time to devote herself entirely to the acquirement of those accomplishments which the good Abbess of St. Agnes had not thought of bestowing on her young charge.

With a natural appreciation of everything beautiful in Nature or Art, a quick apprehension, and a taste for music and painting, Isabelle made a rapid progress in every study to which she applied herself, and her delighted aunt anticipated the pleasure of introducing her into the first society in Venice, when she should

have completed her sixteenth year ; but unforeseen events intervened which totally changed the destiny of Isabelle.

The Marchesa, though no longer young, was still a fine-looking woman, and passionately fond of admiration. Gay, and a lover of pleasure, she spent her days in a perpetual whirl of amusement, while Isabelle was closely immured in the palazzo, under the charge of an old domestic called Nina, and surrounded by teachers of all descriptions. A woman so full of vanity and so fond of admiration as was the Marchesa, could not fail at last of becoming the prey of some needy adventurer ; and before Isabelle had been a year and a half with her, she had formed a matrimonial connection with a soldier of fortune, young enough to be her son.

This youthful and imperious husband made her understand in a few months that her adoption of Isabelle was not at all to his taste, and he very soon proposed that they should escort

her back to her old friends in the Convent of St. Agnes, at the foot of the Pyrenees, and to this the indignant Marchesa was obliged to consent, as he was equally unmoved by tears, entreaties, and reproaches.

Whatever might have been the Chevalier de Valcour's mortification at these proceedings, the young Isabelle saw again with rapture the beloved scenes around the Convent, and embraced her ancient friends with the warmest demonstrations of joy.

It is true that for the last few weeks of her abode at Venice, her aunt, without assigning any reason, had relaxed in her usual discipline, and had taken her to one or two gay fêtes ; but if some events had occurred in this short period calculated to leave indelible impressions upon her mind, they were memories, not painful in the retrospection, but soft, dim, dream-like as the recollections of a beautiful tale to which we have listened with unwearied interest, or some sweet song that haunts us, even in

our dreams—they were too fairy-like, too unreal, to fill her with regret.

Perchance had she been older, at the time they occurred, it might have been otherwise, but as it was, they interfered not with her wild delight at again beholding the home of her youth.

And now, more than ever attached to those scenes, she must again leave everything that she loved the most.

The child of solitude and seclusion was going at once to be placed in the midst of all the maddening gaiety and turmoil of the most polished and dissipated capital in Europe.

Her reception by the King was gracious and condescending—by his Queen it was kind and fascinating. In deep mourning for her father, the young orphan pleaded for permission to live for a few months in retirement; and this being granted, she never made her appearance, except when it came to her turn to wait upon the Queen. At all other times she confined

herself entirely to her own apartments, only leaving them to perform her devotions in the chapel, or to take an early and solitary ramble in the gardens of the Palace, when she was always as closely veiled as if she had been still an inmate in the Convent of St. Agnes.

Soon, however, the King became impatient of her total seclusion, and signified his wishes upon that point to the Queen, mentioning his desire that at the approaching fêtes which he was about to give in the gardens of Versailles, Isabelle should appear with the other ladies of her train; and as he had resolved to give his young ward a noble marriage portion, he already began to look around for a suitable match for her amongst the young lordlings of his court.

The one who after some deliberation in his own mind, the King at length fixed upon, was the young Baron de Montfort, a handsome and accomplished cavalier, only son of the Count de Beaumont, who had been for several years a favorite of Louis, and although the family was

ancient and distinguished, as their possessions were by no means extensive, the King shrewdly thought that the magnificent dowry he was going to bestow upon his ward would be considered by the Count as a welcome addition to their diminished heritage.

Louis judged rightly in this respect. The Count eagerly accepted the intended alliance, and expressed his conviction of his son's grateful obedience to the commands of his sovereign. But in this supposition he was entirely mistaken.

De Montford with a thousand good qualities had all the faults of an only and spoiled child. If he was ingenuous, high-spirited, and generous, he was likewise impetuous, self-willed, and reckless of consequences; and on the Count opening to him the intentions of the King in his favour, he, to his father's great surprise and dismay, expressed his positive determination never to accept the lady's hand.

For so peremptory and decided a resistance

to the commands of his sovereign and the wishes of his father, there must have been some strong and secret motive, particularly as he had not, as yet, even seen Isabelle—and there was one,

The young Baron de Montfort was passionately attached to the witty, beautiful, and intriguing Marchioness de Varville. Although several years older than the Baron, she exercised an unlimited influence over him.

Her bewitching manners and seductive arts, combined with talent of no ordinary class, had enlisted him for the last year among the most devoted, as he certainly was the most favoured, of her admirers; and public report alleged, with more truth than is generally found in such surmises, that on the death of the old Marquis, who was now almost in his dotage, the infatuated De Montfort would lead the beautiful but unprincipled Clementine to the altar.

Of this entanglement, his father, as is frequently the case, knew less than any one else;

or if he gave it a thought, considered it only as the fleeting fancy of a young man. His son's opposition therefore to the marriage which the King had determined on for him, seemed as extraordinary as it was rash and unlooked for.

It was in vain, however, that the Count represented to De Montfort the total impossibility of his opposing the will of the King—the madness in short of such a proceeding, and that the probable consequences would be, with so absolute a monarch as Louis, the certain destruction of all his prospects in life, most likely a *lettre de cachet* and perpetual imprisonment in the Bastile.

To these arguments and many more, urged with all the energy and anxiety of a father, the young Baron continued inexorable ; but when the Count spoke of himself, of his own banishment from court, of the pain it would give him to fall under the displeasure of a sovereign whom he loved—of the pecuniary embarrass-

ments which he laboured under, consequent on the sacrifices he had made in order to give his son that education, and make him that allowance which enabled him to vie with the most distinguished of the young nobility at court, and which, though his birth might demand, his narrow income forbade—the young man, unmoved by any considerations on his own account, could not be insensible to what related personally to his father whom he tenderly loved—and after a severe struggle between love and duty, gave a reluctant promise to acquiesce in all that his monarch required—a consent made afterwards still more bitter by the passionate tears and reproaches of the indignant Marchioness de Varville.

CHAPTER II.

La plupart de ces solennités brillantes ne sont souvent que pour les yeux et les oreilles ; ce qui n'est que pompe et magnificence passe en un jour : mais quand des chefs d'œuvre de l'art, comme le Tartuffe, font l'ornement de ces fêtes, elles laissent après elles une éternelle mémoire.

Voltaire.

ISABELLE heard of her approaching marriage with consternation, but without a thought of resisting the wishes of the Queen who imparted it to her.

“ You must now, my gentle Isabelle,” con-

tinued she kindly, "give up this love of retirement and appear at some of the gay festivities which are soon to take place—and this chain," she added with sweet condescension, taking a gold one of exquisite workmanship from her own neck, "must replace this black ribbon which ill becomes your swan-like throat."

As Marie Thérèse uttered these words she took the black ribbon from the neck of Isabelle, and found that to it was suspended a locket of curious and beautiful device. The Queen looked at it with much admiration, and taking it from the ribbon, hung it on the chain of gold, while the embarrassed Isabelle did not dare to raise her eyes from the ground, and clasping it round the neck of her young favourite, said archly,

"*Gage d' amitie ou d' amour, Isabelle ?*"

Isabelle did not dare reply to this question, and the Queen pitying her confusion changed

the conversation to some indifferent subject, and after awhile said with great affability,

“ I have ordered my *marchande de modes* to bring you all sorts of pretty dresses, that you may choose a becoming robe for to-morrow, when the King purposes to introduce to you the young Baron de Montfort.”

Isabelle's thanks were almost inarticulate, and the Queen with a gracious smile dismissed her.

On the following day the King and all his court went to Versailles, where the proposed fête was to take place.

It was the month of July and an entertainment in the delicious gardens of Versailles amidst cool grottos and shady arbours, refreshed by innumerable jets d'eaux, and surrounded by thickets of odoriferous shrubs held out attractions not to be resisted by any who could possibly gain access to it.

Isabelle felt as if she had arrived in the

region of fairy land, so new and dream-like did everything appear to her eye. Art vied with nature in the enchanting disposition of the grounds, in the midst of which rose a palace that seemed to be erected by the presiding genii of the place, where gold and marble, exquisite paintings and rich hangings met the eye in every direction.

Here the officers who had been sent forward by the King to prepare every thing for their reception, were in waiting to receive them. After a slight collation, the ladies retired to repose themselves during the sultry heats of the day, and to prepare for their afternoon's amusement, and about six o'clock in the evening their Majesties, accompanied by all the nobles and ladies of the court, sought the shade of the beautiful pleasure grounds which surrounded the palace.

Could Isabelle alone and unseen have penetrated into the deep recesses of those delicious gardens and have strayed at will through the

long galleries and suites of apartments in the palace she would have enjoyed all this fairy scene unalloyed. But soon she shrunk with dismay from the remarks which she could not help perceiving were made upon her, on this her first appearance in public, and the introduction of her intended bridegroom by the King himself did not tend to increase her self-possession.

The Baron de Montfort bowed with a haughty coldness, and after uttering, with ill-dissembled politeness, a few common-place observations, to which her extreme confusion scarcely permitted her to reply, turned abruptly away, to lavish all his attentions upon a sparkling brunette, whom Isabelle afterwards understood to be Madame de Varville.

Timid and distressed, Isabelle now followed the Queen and the other ladies of her train, through several shady alleys, into a thick grove, which formed a species of labyrinth, through whose intricacies the rays of

the sun could scarcely penetrate, and in the midst of which was an open space, bordered with a smooth green turf.

Here a splendid collation was prepared, and each table which held the comestibles, presented a novel and ingenious spectacle.

On one side deep recesses, scooped out of a lofty mound, were filled with the choicest cold viands, while opposite, the eye wandered to a palace, built entirely of comfitures. In another part, orange trees hung over a fountain, and the most delicious fruits were suspended from their branches, while at a little distance, water, thrown by a *jet d'eau*, more than fifty feet high, fell with a refreshing sound upon the ear, and mingled with the soft melody, produced by unseen musicians.

Isabelle stole unobserved from the green turf, where all the Court were assembled, and seated herself in a bower hard by, which was nearly concealed from view, by a thicket of flowering shrubs.

Here she could see all that was going on, unperceived by others, and she now found that she could breathe more freely, and collect her scattered thoughts. The Baron de Montfort with his haughty bearing, was still before her eyes; the accents of his voice still rung distressingly in her ears, and she felt that, short as had been their interview, she had conceived towards him an invincible dislike.

What reeked it to her, that he was among the handsomest and most accomplished nobles of the Court! Had she not seen at a glance, with a woman's keen perception, that he was devoted to another, and how could she, simple and retiring as she was, dare hope to win him from the sparkling beauty, who seemed to hang upon his words!

And yet, such was the man she was to marry; it must be so; the King had willed it, and there was no escape.

She could have wept, but her proud heart would not stoop to tears. Ah! would she

were now in her beloved Convent, making garments for the poor peasantry!—there she was happy and contented. And now she imaged to herself her native valley, with its rushing streams and headlong precipices, and she could almost fancy she heard the hum of the wild bees, as they extracted a delicious honey from the perfumed heath, and the tinkling of the sheep-bells, as the shepherd's voice recalled them from the edge of some precipitous rock.

Thus she mused, when, involuntarily and unwillingly, she heard the following dialogue.

“Do not congratulate me, De Cressy,” said a voice, which Isabelle recognized as that of De Montfort. “Do not congratulate me, I conjure you, upon this hateful marriage. I have seen her to-day for the first time and——”

“She is certainly graceful and elegant looking,” interrupted De Cressy, “and as well as I could glimpse her features through her thick

veil, young and interesting, and a few more months' sojourn at Court will remove that timid, nun-like air, which she now wears."

"Graceful—interesting!" exclaimed De Montfort, contemptuously. "I tell you, De Cressy, she is a mere, uneducated, country maiden—besides, you know I passionately love another—ten thousand times would I prefer banishment from Court—aye! death itself, to this detested union—and were it not for my father—but it is madness to talk of it—and Clementine!—Oh! how different is she from Clementine!"

"True," replied De Cressy, "she does not in the least resemble the brilliant, witty Madame de Varville, but, consider, she is much younger, and so inexperienced—"

Here Isabelle was prevented from hearing any more, by the arrival of two ladies, who had been sent by the Queen in search of her, as the collation being over, they were all going

to see a play performed, in another part of the grounds.

The young Marquis de Cressy handed Isabelle into the carriage, which was to convey her and some of the other maids of honour to the appointed spot, while De Montfort, pale and agitated, brushed quickly by, in search of Madame de Varville, who was a little in advance.

Following the carriage of the King and Queen through a long avenue of linden trees, and round the celebrated Fountain of the Swans, in the midst of which a brazen dragon, pierced with an arrow in the throat, seemed to vomit forth blood, while dolphins refreshed the air with continued *jets d'eau*, they arrived at a patch of green sward, where *Sieur Vigarini* had erected a temporary theatre. Without it had the appearance of a green bower, and within, of a magnificent *salon*, from the centre of which, hung numerous chandeliers of crystal, each bearing six waxen lights, and display-

ing the rich tapestries and gorgeous mirrors, with which it was hung; while around were disposed, in an amphitheatre, seats and benches for several hundred persons.

In front was the theatre, over which the curtain still hung. On each side, raised on pedestals of marble, were two columns of bronze and lapis lazuli, with golden branches, and leaves of the vine. Upon the cornices, were engraved the arms of the King, surrounded by trophies; and between each column appeared figures, representing Peace and Victory.

Louis and his Queen enjoyed the surprise of all around, at those charming decorations.

And now the curtain rose, displaying what appeared a fair and lovely garden, where shepherds and shepherdesses, peasants, satyrs and wood-gods, were scattered about in every direction.

Soon, arraying themselves in order, they

approached, and performed a comedy and interlude, composed for the occasion, by Moliere, who acted the principal character himself.

Isabelle had never before seen a representation of this sort, and it took entire possession of her faculties. Absorbed in the contemplation of the scene before her, and in listening to the songs of the shepherds and shepherdesses, she forgot everything—time, place, her approaching marriage, and all the world. It was only at the end of the first interlude, that she awoke to reality.

Then she started as from a dream—she recollected all, and sighed deeply. Ah! would she were now a peasant girl to tend the sheep and milk the cows—How willingly would she have exchanged her condition with one—only bargaining for a free and unfettered life.

Soon, however, *George Dandin* appeared upon the stage. The inimitable Moliere played the part himself—The melancholy of Isabelle

was dissipated—she was enchained, astonished—she, too, joined in the merriment of the audience—she, too, laughed at the rich but silly peasant, who dared to make so disproportioned an alliance, and even while she condemned *Angelique* enjoyed her stratagems. Then again the shepherds and shepherdesses appeared in the interludes, and the entertainment concluded with their songs and dances.

Leaving the theatre the numerous assembly that filled it, now poured forth through a portico in a different direction from the one by which they had entered.

The moon had risen, and her brilliant rays seemed almost to eclipse the lights that sparkled in every direction through the thick foliage.

The gay cavaliers, attached to the party to which Isabelle belonged, crowded around her, anxious to proffer their services. She had that night been pronounced beautiful by the majority of those who deemed themselves connoisseurs in

beauty—some had praised the expression and nobility of her features, and the witchery of her dark eyes—others her graceful *tournure* and symmetry of figure, while all blamed and pitied De Montfort for his blindness to her charms.

Following the King, who led the way through a cross alley, they beheld, at some little distance, a lofty temple covered with verdure, and streaming with lights. Cunning artificers had wrought so well, that brilliant illuminations were seen in every part of it, sparkling as if by magic, through the waters of fountains which fell with a gentle murmur from the large vases that crowned the pilasters, which stood at the angles of the edifice, while thick masses of trees surrounding it on every side, and through which a moon-beam did not penetrate, rendered it, by contrast, still more dazzling.

Isabelle looked at it with wonder, and felt as if it were a fairy palace, into which some elfin

knight conducted his beloved. Within its walls, in the midst of an extensive area, rose an immense rock. On the summit of it, Pegasus with extended wings seemed to spring forward into the air, while from beneath his foot gushed forth a stream of water, that dashed and foamed impetuously over the sharp projections which impeded its course, and then murmuring softly through little ravines, over variegated pebbles and shells, mingled its bubblings with the musical instruments which Apollo and the Muses, who formed a group near the base of the rock, seemed to strike.

Amongst the shells, moss, and green herbage, at the foot of the rock, were laid a number of covers for the King and those of his court whom he should honour by selecting, while under bowers, grottos, and tents, in the neighbouring alleys, the rest of the feast was set forth.

Fauns and hamadryades, wood-gods and

nymphs of the fountains, who still haunt the beautiful gardens of Versailles, weep over its departed glories, for never again will you behold fêtes so unique, so magnificent ! weep, for those days will never come again !

The pleasures of this day were not however ended yet. After supper the King retired, and turning his steps in the direction of the palace, introduced his guests into another enchanted hall, beautiful as the temple they had left, but in a different taste, as it was all gorgeous with porphyry and marbles, and adornments of every kind.

Isabelle though delighted with all she saw, had no mind to participate in the entertainment of the ball, but amused herself by gazing upon the various sets of dancers who moved gracefully to the sound of musicians so skilfully concealed from view, that it was Arion riding upon a dolphin emerging from the crystal waters which washed the sides of a grotto of shells that touched the lyre, while Orpheus on

a rock hard by, seemed to vie with two sea-nymphs seated at the foot of it in bringing forth the most melodious sounds.

Isabelle at length retired into a deep recess from whence she could look into the gardens, and gazed into the depths of the soft lights and shadows without. There was a delicious freshness in the look of the groves, and she fancied how exquisite must be the song of the nightingale in the silence of night—now, if she did sing, the dashing of torrents of water mingling with the instruments of music drowned her plaintive notes.

But Isabelle was left only a short time to her meditations. Soon every one crowded to the balconies to behold the brilliant illuminations which the *sieur* Gissey had prepared. The palace of Versailles itself appeared to be on fire. Fire seemed to issue from the rocks, from the earth, from the mouths of dragons and of every form of animal that imagination could invent, while floods of water seemed to pursue

them in every direction, as if in a vain attempt to extinguish the flames. The cypher of Louis appeared traced in characters of fire in every direction, and the whole concluded with a deafening explosion which not only extinguished the illuminations but seemed to put the stars to flight, for the dawn of morning was now seen to put forth.

At length the fatigued Isabelle found herself on the way to St. Germain, and soon seeking her pillow fell into a deep sleep, but memory and imagination, ever watching, pursued her with a thousand wild and fitful vagaries—now she fancied herself enveloped by real flames and nameless horrors, and a hand was stretched forth to save her, but that hand was not the hand of De Montfort. Then she dreamed that she was alone in some cool dark grotto—there was no sound of music, but the plaintive song of the nightingale—no illuminations but those of the bright stars twinkling in the dark blue heavens, and the moonbeams

streaming in a soft light upon the tessellated pavement that bordered the fountain close by ; and now the river-god who hung over it, filling his urn from the crystal wave, suddenly appeared to start into life—he approached her, and knelt before her—she tried to shriek and covered her face with her hands. Anon, a soft voice which she once knew, called her Agnes ! dear Agnes ! and seizing her hand pressed it to his lips. She looked again but the river-god had disappeared, and she recognized the figure of one whom she had seen last by the light of that same moon, but the face was indistinct and shadowy.

“ Have you indeed forgotten me, Agnes ? ” he said ; and in her effort to answer him Isabelle awoke.

At length came the eve of her wedding-day, and Isabelle, agitated, bewildered, and weary, found herself, towards midnight, alone in her own apartment.

Ever since the fête at Versailles all had been

for her distracting bustle and confusion. She had been hurried from one scene of gaiety to another—masked balls, fêtes, theatricals—a perfect whirl of dissipation.

The Queen herself had graciously presented her with a magnificent *trousseau*—the King had given her a splendid suit of diamonds. The ladies of the Court vied with each other who should show her most attention and kindness, in order to ingratiate themselves with the Queen. The young nobles pursued her with compliments, envying the insensible De Montfort so fair and so richly dowried a bride.

Everything combined to bewilder, to soothe, to flatter the young novice, but in vain. Willingly would she have escaped from all this turmoil—willingly, oh, how willingly would she have released De Montfort from his hated engagement; who, cold, pre-occupied, dejected and spiritless, but too plainly showed how heavy he considered the chain, that was to bind them together.

The eve of her wedding-day however was arrived ; and pale and spiritless as De Montfort himself, Isabelle stood before her mirror.

With a heavy sigh she took the little gold locket, which we have mentioned before, from her bosom, and wistfully gazed upon it.

“ It was but a dream,” said she, with a still deeper sigh, as she pressed it to her lips. “ It was only a dream, but how sweet in its memory—would it had never been !”

Then slowly taking the locket off the chain to which the Queen had appended it, she looked at it again.

“ I cannot part with it,” said she, replacing it ; “ and why should I ? Is he not as the dead to me ? I know not even his name. Why do I think of him now ? I thought not of him—I dreamt not of him, in the Convent of St. Agnes.—yet now he is ever before me in my dreams, in my waking thoughts. But I will forget him again ; and this can be to me but as a token of friendship, a remembrance of one

who saved my life. No, I cannot part with it. Ah! would that to-morrow could see me the bride of Heaven, and not of De Montfort! then I would not even think of him. Yet I pity De Montfort too—yes, he is as unhappy as I am, and like me he has no escape.”

What were the remembrances attached to this locket that made Isabelle thus soliloquise? To explain them we must refer to the last fortnight she passed with her aunt at Venice, five years before the commencement of this narrative.

CHAPTER III.

Over the mountains,
And under the waves,
Over the fountains,
And under the graves ;
Under floods that are deepest,
Which Neptune obey ;
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way.

OLD SONG.

From Percy's Reliques.

It was the season of the carnival at Venice—
every one knows what a carnival at Venice is
—The lagunes, or canals, were filled with

gondolas crowd with masquerading personages in gay and fantastic dresses, while music floated on the air in every direction.

On this particular evening there was amongst many others, a masqued ball at the house of the Signor Pesaro, one of the wealthiest and most magnificent of the Venetian nobles; and thither the Marchesa Loredan took her beautiful niece Isabelle, arrayed in the costume of a gipsy girl with a gittern, while she herself was splendidly dressed as a Roman matron of the days of the Cæsars. It was the first time that Isabelle had been at any amusement of the kind, and she looked round with girlish delight. Sheltered under her mask from all recognition, she sung, with a soft, clear voice, snatches of the songs she had learned, in order to support her part; but when a graceful young cavalier approached, and begged her to tell him his fortune, she felt her courage fail and she clung closer to her aunt, who, however, did not perceive her embarrassment, being herself engaged in

an animated conversation with an old Roman senator.

“Lovely Bohémienne,” said the youth, who was dressed as a Spanish cavalier, and whose accent pronounced him to be no Italian, “how can I tempt you to tell me my fortune?—will a ruby heart, or a golden one bribe you to answer me?”

“Sir Knight,” said the young maiden, timidly, “it is my first masquerade, and to own the truth, I am but a sad adept as yet in my new character.”

“Charming innocence!” exclaimed the youth in French.

“Dear Agnes!” said the Marchesa, at this moment addressing Isabelle, and calling her by her second name, which she always used in preference to that of Isabelle, Agnes being her own baptismal appellation; and speaking to her at the same time in Italian, which was now more habitual to her from her long residence in Italy than French, “Dear Agnes, it is so hot,

and I am so thirsty—I must try and get some lemonade.”

The young cavalier scarcely gave her time to finish the sentence, before he was at her side with the desired beverage. The Marchesa politely thanked him, and seeing a group of masks that she thought she recognised, moved on to join them, while the youth still hovered close to Isabelle.

“ Ah!” said he, “ I have discovered your name—it is Agnes—sweet Agnes!—I will give you a lesson in telling fortunes, if you will give me your hand. There now,” said he, taking it and pressing it to his lips gallantly, “ I will read the lines of your destiny.”

Isabelle drew back her hand half frightened.

“ Forgive me,” continued he, earnestly, “ I did not intend to offend you—it was the tones of your charming voice that first attracted me, and now I would give worlds to see you without your mask.”

By this time the Marchesa, who found her-

self quite separated from the party with whom she had entered the room, turned her steps towards the vestibule, and called for her gondola. The crowd was so excessive, that Isabelle with great difficulty clung to the arm of her aunt—yet, notwithstanding all her exertions to keep close to her, she was forcibly jostled apart by a group of Pulcinellas and Arlecchinos, and to her dismay, found herself alone in the midst of a masked crowd entirely unknown to her. For an instant she stood motionless with terror ; but almost immediately the young Spaniard was at her side, and seizing her hand drew her on rapidly whispering :

“ We shall reach your chaperon in a moment, but first tell me, I conjure you, are you to be at the entertainment given at the ducal palazzo to-morrow evening ?”

Isabelle, who knew her aunt would be there, and that she was to accompany her, answered in the affirmative.

“ And your dress?—do not deny me the

happiness of recognising you again—What is to be your dress?”

“ I cannot tell,” replied Isabelle, with much confusion, “ my aunt has not yet decided what character I am to appear in.”

The youth made a gesture of disappointment, and exclaimed :

“ Nevertheless it is impossible, that I shall not recognise you.”

He now led Isabelle to the top of the steps, where they found Marchesa anxiously looking around in search of her.

With a hasty reprimand to Isabelle for her giddiness in thus allowing herself to be separated from her, and a cold bow to the masked stranger, the Marchesa desired Isabelle to descend into the gondola before her. The young cavalier however, nothing daunted by the distant air of the Marchesa, assisted Isabelle down the steps, and then, beckoning to a gondolier to approach, sprang into another gondola, and desired the boatmen to follow the one into which

the two ladies had just entered ; and to mark where they landed. But in the confusion occasioned by the number of gondolas, which pressed forward to receive the departing guests, he had the mortification to lose sight of it, almost immediately.

On the following evening the stranger sought in vain for the young maiden, amidst the crowd of masks who filled the extensive suite of apartments in the ducal palazzo.

At length, in the timid air of a young nun of the order of St. Francesca, he thought he recognised her towards the latter end of the evening. She was seated alone in a little bower of lemon trees, which had been so well arranged on one of the balconies, as to look as if they had taken root there, and on his approaching her, dressed in the same Spanish garb as that he wore on the preceding evening, he saw by a slight involuntary start that she had recognised him.

He now eagerly accosted her, and tried to

prevail on her to unmask, but in vain, she seemed terrified by his entreaties, and hastily joined her aunt who was on the other side of the bower, and was now preparing to depart.

The young Cavalier much mortified, followed them closely and leaning over the balustrade beheld the Marchesa enter the gondola, but the young maiden who had just caught a glimpse of his figure, and who had already repented of the cold reception she had given him, turning her head to be certain that it was indeed *he* who was observing them, made a false step and was immediately precipitated into the canal. Quick as lightning the stranger flung himself from the balcony into the water, and endeavoured to grasp her robe, but in vain, the stroke of a gondolier anxious to reach the place where the guests were taking their departure brought his gondola over the very spot where her mantiglia had been seen, and the disappointed youth dived impetuously beneath the boat in search of her.

It was however only the work of a moment. Before any of the gondoliers had time to offer their assistance, and while the piercing shrieks of the Marchesa still echoed on the ear, the Spanish mask appeared again upon the surface of the water, and though stunned himself by an accidental stroke from one of the oars, bore in his arms the fainting form of Isabelle, who though apparently unconscious, heard, as in a dream, his whispered ejaculation of "Lovely Agnes! it is I—be not afraid—you are safe."

The gondola now moved on, the Marchesa almost forgetting in her transport at recovering her niece, to thank her deliverer, but the youth had now no difficulty in discovering to whom the gondola belonged, as this accident had attracted many eyes towards it and he soon found its destination was towards the palazzo of the Loredan.

For several days the young stranger lingered about that quarter of Venice in which the palazzo of Loredan was situated—sometimes he

watched the great gate of the court, in hopes he should see the maiden issue from its portal—at other times from a gondola he observed the marble steps which led to the edge of the canal, and cast many a wistful look towards the balconies projecting over the water, but all his watchings and vigils appeared doomed to be fruitless—dames and cavaliers, domestics and gondoliers, went and came, but amongst them he recognised not the slender form he had snatched from the Lagune.

The carnival was past. It was now the season of fasting and prayer, and every evening saw the young Isabelle closely veiled, with her *gouvernante*, sometimes also accompanied by the Marchesa, pass through a private egress from the palazzo, and enter the neighbouring church of the Salute. As yet however she had escaped the vigilant eye of her lover, whose disappointment at not beholding her, made him only more anxious in the pursuit.

One evening the youth, weary of thus vainly watching the balconies and windows of the palazzo from his gondola, strayed into this church. It was dimly lighted—so dimly that the figures which moved through its long aisles, seemed to flit about like so many spectres. At the conclusion of the service, Isabelle rose from her devotions. She had been kneeling close beside a pillar, and was quite in the shade. Suddenly she heard a voice near her, which she immediately recognized as that of the young cavalier who had so adventurously plunged into the Lagune after her, on the night of the masquerade.

He exclaimed in a low whisper as he bent his head near hers, “Agnes! lovely Agnes—have I found you again—I knew your voice when you joined in the Vesper hymn just now. How fortunate that I should accidentally seat myself on a bench close beside you! Speak—tell me that I am not mistaken—that it is in-

deed you whom I have found. Ah! if you knew how unweariedly I have sought for you?"

Isabelle started and trembled, but she did not now draw back the hand which he had taken.

"I am very glad Signor," replied she in a faltering voice, "to be able to return you thanks in person, for the great service you have rendered me. Believe me I am truly grateful."

"Will you prove it," said the young stranger in soft persuasive accents.

"How can I?" replied Isabelle, and as she uttered these words, Nina approached, (the Marchesa had not accompanied them that evening) and whispered to her, that it was time to depart.

"Good nurse," said the stranger, slipping a heavy purse into her hand, "you will not refuse me a few moments' conversation with you young mistress?"

Then turning to Isabelle whose hand he still

held within his, he added in a tone of passionate entreaty.

“Sweet one ! you will not refuse to listen to me for five minutes?”

The considerate Nina removed to a little distance, and the agitated Isabelle felt that she could not deny this request made by one to whom she was so deeply indebted. The church was now nearly empty, only a solitary step was heard, here and there, echoing through the distant aisles. Many of the lamps had gone out, but the rays of the moon just risen, had found their way through the painted glass of a gothic window at some distance, and threw a transient light upon the figures of the youth and maiden as they stood behind the pillar—he, pouring forth the most passionate protestations of love, and recounting his hopes, his fears, his disappointments in the search he had after her—she, listening to his vows with an inexplicable mixture of timid bewilderment and unacknowledged pleasure, but soon the

prudent Nina approached, fearful that their delay might be remarked, and hurried her young mistress away, not however before the youth had obtained from Isabelle a reluctant promise that she would not mention this accidental meeting to the Marchesa, lest it might induce her to forbid their attendance at vespers on the following evening.

Too young to understand aright those vague and delicious sensations just awakened in her little heart, or to know if indeed she had a heart to bestow, Isabelle deemed this new and sweet emotion, the chord of passionate feeling for the first time touched in her existence, but as the ebullition of a gratitude due to this young stranger. Nevertheless, a secret consciousness that it was wrong to listen to such language without the knowledge of her aunt, would in all probability have prevented her from throwing herself in the way of another interview had not Nina, won by his gold, persuaded her that she could not, without base

ingratitude, fly from her preserver, that while she was with her, there could not be the slightest impropriety in meeting him in the church, and that as to telling her aunt, it would be the word for her own immediate dismissal.

This last argument settled the question, for since the marriage of the Marchesa, her temper had become so variable and irritable that Isabelle trembled at the idea of losing Nina.

Thus, the next evening at the hour of vespers, when the presence of the Marchesa prevented the youth from addressing Isabelle, she did not breathe a hint of his vicinity, although conscious that he was hovering near her; nor did she on the following one, when the absence of her aunt gave him an opportunity, reject the locket which he fastened round her neck, or refuse to bestow on him the little gold cross attached to her rosary, for which he so passionately entreated; neither did she listen with indifference when he told her, that he must

leave Venice on the following day, for a week, but that on his return, he would disclose his name and rank to her relatives, and demand her hand in marriage.

His name and rank! Silly girl! she had never even asked him his name—she knew not his country—his profession—they were at this instant, almost as beings of another sphere to each other.

They had met at the masquerade—they had met beneath the star-lit heavens—by the flitting moonbeams, and in the shadowy and dimly lighted aisles of the church of the *Salute*; but could she tell if it might not be the uncertainty of those meetings, and the undefinable charm which the concealment of a masquerade dress and the transient glimpses caught of her veiled form through the dimness and obscurity of evening, that awakened this passionate love in the breast of the stranger. Whether her dark eyes would have looked as fascinating, and her smile as angelic when seen in the garish eye of

day, cannot now be told, for within that week, during the absence of her lover, Isabelle was hurried away from Venice, with the indignant Marchesa, by the imperious husband the latter had so madly chosen.

It might be about ten days after this last meeting of Isabelle and the young stranger in the church of the *Salute* that, towards the close of a fine spring evening, two cavaliers, apparently foreigners, coming from opposite sides of the square of St. Mark, met beneath the massive façade of the cathedral church which forms one end of that far-famed square.

The deepening twilight threw its indistinct shadows upon the groups who still lingered around, while their different costumes and the confused hum of many languages, proclaimed them to be the denizens of different countries. The shops were already beginning to be deserted, and the coffee-houses and places of entertainment were filling fast. Here and there you might see some stranger preparing to re-

turn to his home, pause to gaze upon the beautiful harbour, with its gondolas in the distance, or glance with a look of wonder through the hollow court of the palace of the Doge upon the Giant's Steps.

“Have you discovered your beautiful incognita, Adhemar?” demanded the elder of the cavaliers, as he approached the other; who, with his dark eyes fixed upon the ground, was walking slowly, and apparently in deep thought, beneath the façade of the church.

“No, Raoul!” exclaimed the other, starting at the sound of his friend's voice, and exhibiting the handsome but dejected countenance of a youth of nineteen. “Agnes is gone, and I can find no trace of her—The palazzo of the Loredan is deserted—All the family left Venice last week, no one knows whither—I found that Agnes is the niece, not the daughter of the Marchesa, from the stupid old porter, who is the only soul remaining in the palazzo—and he knows not even her name, only *la Signora*

Agnese!—I have lost her for ever—so artless—so timid—so ingenuous!”

“My dear Adhemar!” rejoined his friend, “this is a most romantic affair; but, perhaps, it is better it has ended thus. What would your father have said to it?”

“I care not,” said Adhemar, impetuously, “could I but find Agnes—my father might be angry but he would forgive—I was to have met her at the church of the *Salute* a few nights since—we had arranged it the evening before I left Venice—her nurse, whom I had gained over to my interest, was to accompany her—I watched, I lingered till night in the church; but they came not—next day I watched the gates, the windows, the balconies of the palazzo, but no one appeared—they seemed all deserted—grown desperate I at last ventured to knock at the gate, this brought out the old porter, who told me that he was now the only inmate within the walls.”

“Believe me I sympathise in your disap-

pointment, my dear friend!" replied his companion, suppressing something very like a smile at those bitter regrets of Adhemar. "But I suspect that, after all, you would most likely have suffered a more severe disappointment by and by. It is not impossible but that your Agnes may resemble the rose

"Quanto si mostra men, tanto è più bella."

"You have only seen her in the moonlight, and the starlight, half hidden beneath the folds of her black veil. Perhaps you would have smiled at your romantic love, could you have compared her with other beauties in the open day."

"It may be so," said Adhemar, with a deep sigh, "but I shall ever regret her loss."

"And you told her that you loved her," said Raoul, enquiringly, "and what said she?"

"She started, and trembled," replied Adhemar, "and looked around for her nurse; then

he wept, and told me she could never forget how I had saved her life."

"Yes!" said his companion, "if you had not thrown yourself so rashly from that high gallery, and dived for her under the gondola, she was gone—I was looking on, and perceived that the gondoliers near at hand, were quite intoxicated and unable to assist her—I suppose they had been carousing, and keeping the carnival amongst themselves."

"I think I shall leave Venice to-morrow," said Adhemar, gloomily, "it is detestable to me now."

"After all, it is but a *triste* place, except perhaps during the carnival," said Raoul. "Those gondolas covered with black cloth, and those grave patricians masked and dressed in black with their mute gondoliers, and those old, dark, gothic looking houses, often chill my blood—this silent city makes me shudder—Nothing ever looks animated except in St. Mark's Square, and even here, when I happen

to enter it early in the morning I cast a wistful glance to see if there may not be half a dozen gibbets planted during the night with a dead body swinging from each of them."

"Then suppose we arrange to leave Venice in company to-morrow?" enquired Adhemar.

"I shall certainly not remain here a day longer."

"Be it so," replied his companion, gaily—"then to-morrow we bid adieu to thee "Island Queen of the Adriatic!" and thus saying, they parted.

CHAPTER IV.

“ All'odiose nozze,
Come, vittima io vengo all' ara avanti.”

METASTASIO.

“ Care selve beate,
E voi solinghi, e taciturni orrori
Di riposo, e di pace alberghi veri
O quanto volontieri
A rivedervi i' torno !”

GUARINI.

THE morning of her marriage day arrived.
Isabelle, though weary and sick at heart, had

not gone to rest all the night. Part of it had been spent in the chapel, and the remainder at prayers, in her own little oratory. She was still kneeling at her devotions, when a slight noise in the adjoining apartment aroused her attention. She knew that her attendant was there, arranging her dress for the approaching ceremony. She had seen the spotless white robe and veil, and the wreath of orange flowers in which she was to consummate, what she felt was truly a sacrifice, laid out in the dressing-room, before she had dismissed Victoire on the preceding evening, and she at first thought, it might be only some message from her *marchand de modes*, who, she knew, considered the minutia of her dress, as a matter of very great importance, when she was startled, by distinguishing the suppressed accents of a male voice.

Presently Victoire knocked at the door, and on being desired to enter, said:—

“ That the Baron De Montfort entreated, to

be permitted to have a few minutes' conversation with Mademoiselle De Valcour !”

Isabelle had scarcely time to make a motion of assent—speak she could not, so great was her astonishment—when the Baron himself, hastily entering, and closing the door on her attendant, stood before her.

If Isabelle was pale and dejected from her long vigil, still paler and more haggard looked the young Baron, while, unheeding her almost inarticulate request, that he would be seated, he thus addressed her:—

“ Mademoiselle De Valcour, if I do not much mistake, your dislike to this ill-starred union, is as deeply rooted as my own—speak—tell me, is it so? Yet, need I ask you!—you, too, have spent a wakeful and a tearful night !”

His voice was calm, and he seemed by a violent effort, to suppress all emotion, as leaning on the back of a chair, he paused to await her answer. It was impossible for Isa-

belle to restrain her tears, while he uttered those words, so careworn was his aspect, and for a moment she could not speak; then with trepidation, she replied:—

“Monsieur, you have read my feelings aright—devoted to a conventual life, I would willingly be the bride of God alone! Is it possible?—can we—”

“It is impossible,” replied the Baron, hurriedly interrupting her. “I came not for that—at eleven o’clock we must meet in the chapel, in the presence of the King and Queen—but I am offered a high post, in the embassy at Constantinople, by my uncle, who is appointed ambassador there. It is for both our happiness to separate—I purpose leaving Paris this very day—you shall reside where you like, either in Paris, or at the Chateau De Beaumont, in Normandy, with an income suitable to your rank. Speak! Mademoiselle De Valcour—does this meet your approbation?”

But he need not have asked her—no reply was necessary—he saw her approval written in her eyes—in the beautiful colour, that flashed across her pale cheek—in the pleased expression that played around her lip—and he well remembered these indications of her sentiments afterwards.

Isabelle felt as if a mountain had been taken off her heart, and after expressing her entire concurrence in his plans, said that a residence at the Chateau de Beaumont would, at present, be most consonant to her wishes. In fact the very idea of going to be her own mistress in the country, made her entirely forget, for the moment, that she was about to be married, and after the Baron's departure, she remained in a pleasing reverie until Victoire announced, that it was quite time for her young mistress to dress.

The marriage was celebrated in the presence of the King and Queen, the Count de Beaumont and several of the lords and ladies of the

court. The King himself gave away the bride and the Bishop of Meaux performed the ceremony. Isabelle felt all the time she knelt beside the altar, as if she were in a dream, nothing around her appeared to have a palpable shape or form—it was to her, but as the fleeting vision of a magic mirror, till she felt the cold hand of De Montfort place the ring upon her finger, the touch seemed to strike an ice bolt to her heart—and now it was over and the King handed her into her carriage, and Isabelle bowed and tried to smile in reply to the various words he uttered, but they all fell upon an unconscious ear, for she heard nothing.

In an hour or two all was arranged for their departure from Paris, and Isabelle found herself, with an inexpressible sensation of pleasure leaving the capital behind her, as the horses galloped on at a rapid race. This feeling was much increased by hearing from Victoire, who was her travelling companion, that the Baron and his train had parted company from them at

about ten leagues from Paris, and had proceeded in a different direction from the one they were travelling.

They did not however reach the Chateau de Beaumont, situated in a remote part of Normandy, till the latter end of the third day. Isabelle's heart absolutely bounded with a rapturous sense of freedom, when she beheld the beautiful hills and valleys, through which the road wound for several leagues before they reached the Chateau. If the face of the country wanted the bold magnificence of her native mountain scenery, she saw, in its fruitful orchards and smiling valleys—its narrow bowery lanes and little rivulets, the picture of a sweet retirement.

The Chateau stood in a secluded valley about a mile distant from the sea shore, and was an ancient building of considerable extent. In former times it had been the constant residence of the family of De Beaumont, but the present Count, losing his wife a few years after his

marriage, had since resided principally in Paris, only visiting the Chateau occasionally. It had however been put into some sort of order in expectation of the arrival of the young bride and bridegroom, as the Count, who had given it up to his son on his marriage, was quite ignorant of the arrangements De Montfort was about to make.

The Baroness d'Anglures only sister of the Count de Beaumont, a widow lady who resided in the neighbourhood with her two daughters, had arrived at the chateau that morning to receive the young bride; a letter received from her nephew the preceding day having notified to her his extraordinary resolution of departing forthwith for Constantinople.

Madame d' Anglures, much startled by this announcement, and feeling deeply interested for her new relative, as did Josephine and Eulalie her daughters, had hastened to be on the spot when the young Baroness should arrive, in order, by her sympathy and kindness, to endeavour

to soften the situation in which De Montfort had so cruelly placed her.

Isabelle was touched and flattered by this kind attention of Madame d' Anglures, who, though astonished that her nephew could neglect so much loveliness, soon perceived that Isabelle was indifferent to, if not satisfied with his proceedings, and that not even a spark of mortified vanity could be discerned in her artless deportment. In fact, for the first time since the death of her father, Isabelle had felt a buoyancy of spirits on entering the avenue which led to the old Chateau, that made her see everything in *couleur de rose*. All around her spoke of peace and liberty; and when she beheld the engaging countenance of Madame d' Anglures, and was embraced by Josephine and Eulalie as a cousin, it seemed to her, as if in leaving the flatteries and illusions of a court, she had been at once transported into the bosom of truth and friendship.

Madame d' Anglures did the honours of the Chateau that evening, and introduced all the aged domestics to Isabelle, while Josephine and Eulalie, who knew every corner of it from infancy, led her through the long galleries and innumerable tapestried apartments, now calling her attention to one window, to look at a distant view of the sea, then to another, to admire what a lovely deep dell it hung over, and how from a third, a flight of steps descended into the extensive hanging gardens, once so beautifully kept that strangers often came from a distance to see them, though now from want of the eye of a mistress, they looked in rather a forlorn condition.

Isabelle had not seen more than half the Chateau when supper-time arrived, and soon after she retired to the apartments prepared for her. They were those formerly occupied by the late Countess de Beaumont, and looked out into a delicious little moon-lit glade.

Victorie was waiting to receive her lady, and Isabelle, fatigued from all the novelty and excitement of the evening, scarcely had laid her head upon the pillow, when she fell into a deep and refreshing sleep; and the first object she beheld in the morning, was the smiling face of the pretty Eulalie peeping between her curtains.

The Baroness d' Anglures remained some weeks at the Chateau, with Isabelle, assisting her to receive and return all the visits of the neighbouring gentry, and on her departure, at Isabelle's request, left Eulalie to bear her company.

Eulalie was a charming, lively little brunette about seventeen years of age, revelling in health and spirits, and delighting in all country amusements and employments.

Disliking much study, or anything that demanded a great deal of attention, Eulalie was always gay, always bright, always occupied

with a thousand innocent little schemes, some of them almost childish, but bringing joy with her wherever she appeared—flitting about like a butterfly, and living almost in the open air—enjoying the breeze, the sun, the flowers, and loving and watching over every young thing that was alive...now it was a nest of unfledged birds, which she had purchased from some mischievous urchins. Then a pet dove—a kitten—a little dog, that engrossed all her cares : yet notwithstanding their great dissimilarity of character, never were two young friends more suited to each other than Isabelle and Eulalie.

Isabelle's more grave turn of mind was a counterpoise to the wild animation of Eulalie, while Eulalie on her side prevented Isabelle from applying herself too much to sedentary pursuits. Thus, when Eulalie read or drew in the morning to please Isabelle, the latter was obliged to lay aside her books and pencils in the afternoon, and stray with her gay little com-

panion through every tangled path in the neighbouring woods—now up that steep track to the summit of the hill to gaze upon the sea—then through the meadows to watch the young lambs, and very often into the farm yard, to have a peep at all the live creatures there. Then they visited together all the farm houses, and poor cottages around—Isabelle sketched out a plan for a school house, and then there was to look out for a school mistress; and to watch the progress of the building, while the Baroness d'Anglures frequently brought Josephine to spend the day with them, and to join in their pursuits—Sometimes too, though not very often, Isabelle invited a few of the neighbouring gentry in the evening, and then they had music and dancing, Madame d'Anglures being always of the party, and although Isabelle did not permit the remembrance of her strange marriage to trouble her repose, yet she never forgot that she was a Baroness and lady of her castle, and did the honours of her chateau with

graceful dignity. And indeed there was nothing to recal the memory of her marriage to Isabelle except as a painful dream that was past. She scarcely ever heard the name of the Baron de Montfort pronounced by any one—his relations studiously avoiding any allusion to him, and the old followers and tenantry, seeing there was something strange and mysterious in the Baron thus living away from his beautiful wife, whatever they might say amongst themselves on the subject, never made mention of him in her presence.

Isabelle divided her time between reading, perfecting herself in the many accomplishments she already possessed—paying charitable visits to all her poor tenantry, who looked up to her as to something angelic, and in the primitive society and innocent recreations of her few near neighbours. Friendship for Eulalie and Josephine seemed to have supplanted all idea of love in her bosom, and her life passed away in a peaceful, calm, and sunshine. She could now

laugh as merrily as Eulalie, and climb the steepest hill with as light and elastic a step—‘the nun like air’ had entirely vanished from her graceful figure, and a delicate and beautiful rose-colour tinted her before pale cheek, and it was universally allowed in the neighbourhood, that there was no one, half so good or half so lovely, as the young Baroness de Montfort.

“He is coming—he is coming!” said Eulalie one morning, as she darted into the room where Isabelle was drawing, and throwing her arms playfully round the neck of the young Baroness made her give a sad splash to the picture on which she was employed. “He is coming!” she exclaimed again, almost out of her wits with joy, and then she danced and waltzed in an ecstasy of delight about the room.

“Who is coming, dear Eulalie?” said Isabelle laughing, “do pray come and sit down near me, and tell me all about it, while I try and wash out this sad spot in my picture.”

“Dear Isabelle forgive me,” replied Eulalie

kissing her—"it is all my fault but it is our old playmate and cousin, Pierre Delamare who has been absent for two years at the college in Paris, and is to be at our Chateau to-morrow on his way to the house of his guardian where he is to spend a few months before he comes of age—here is a note from Josephine, and we are to go over and stay a week with mamma—that is, dear Isabelle," added she coaxingly, "if it will be agreeable to you."

"Oh yes—it will be quite delightful, I long already to see your old playmate Eulalie," said Isabelle still laughing, "but how comes it that you never mentioned him to me before?"

"I cannot tell how it was," replied Eulalie, and here she blushed deeply, "just before he went to Paris, he was at his studies and we did not see a great deal of him—no—yes, I did see him certainly sometimes while he was at his guardian's house, which is only a league from this, but when we were very young we were always together and he used to climb the

trees, and pull nuts for us, and bring me such beautiful bouquets of flowers—to Josephine as well as to me,” added Eulalie, and again she blushed, “and then we had such games at *Colin Maillard* and Proverbs.”

“Then he will be a great acquisition indeed,” said Isabelle, glancing at Eulalie, but appearing to be very industriously employed in repairing the injury done to the drawing, “for I suppose, if he be so good a hand at *Colin Maillard*, he is likewise fond of dancing, and would like to dance all the evening long as you do?”

“Pierre was grown more grave when I saw him last,” said Eulalie, “but he could dance and waltz without ever being tired; but he is not too grave however, and he is so very clever that his godfather, the Archbishop of — said if he would go into the church he would certainly become a cardinal but; I know Pierre will never take holy orders and he will soon be his own master.”

“And then I suppose he will marry,” said Isabelle, and settle down here very quietly.”

“I know not how that will be,” replied Eulalie in some confusion, “but—oh! there is my little pet fawn looking for me, I must fly to feed her—Good bye Isabelle,” and Eulalie all smiles and blushes darted out of the room.

CHAPTER V.

There, as in glist'ring glory she did sit,
She held a great gold chaine ylinked well,
Whose upper end to highest heaven was knit,
And lower part did reach to lowest hell ;
And all that prease did round about her swell,
To catchen hold of that long chaine, thereby
To climb aloft and others to excell ;
That was Ambition, rash desire to stie ;
And ev'ry link thereof a step of dignitie.

SPENSER.

EARLY the next day Isabelle, accompanied by the happy Eulalie, went to the Chateau d' Anglures.

It was an old-fashioned, gloomy-looking building occupying three sides of a court, which was shut in by a massy gate. The principal apartments, however looked into a hanging garden at one side of the Chateau, consisting of several terraces, and commanding a beautiful view of the hills and valleys around ; and on fête days, like the present, this suite of apartments being thrown open, Isabelle was conducted into the grand salon, where she found Madame d'Anglures with Josephine and several of their country neighbours whom they had invited, in order to have a merry party to welcome Pierre Delamare, who had been a great favourite in the neighbourhood.

Isabelle looked behind for Eulalie, but she was flown to the garden, having recognised through a window in the gallery the figure of her cousin at a distance. Yet although she had darted forward like a young fawn to meet him, an involuntary feeling of timidity made

her pause, and she would have flown back again had not the young man suddenly turned and exclaimed—

“ Eulalie !”

Why did her heart beat so violently when he took her hand, and why did its pulsation as quickly cease for an instant when their eyes met! Was he not the same Pierre Delamare as of yore? What was it that thus chilled her young heart—was it a presentiment that a change had come over him? The feeling, however, vanished almost instantaneously. The colour rose to Pierre’s temples as he gazed upon Eulalie; then he told her how well she looked, and how very glad he was to see her again; and a softer expression took possession of his features, while a bright joy shone in his eyes. Soon, however, starting and checking himself, as if a sudden thought had flashed across his mind, he proposed, rather hurriedly, that they should join the company in the salon.

Isabelle was much surprised when she first beheld Pierre Delamare. From Eulalie's evident partiality and the artless account she had given of him, she had represented to herself a gay, handsome, ingenuous-looking youth, not unlike the other young men in the province—perhaps a little more polished in manners and exterior, but she was not prepared for the thoughtful brow, the studious air, and the cold, dignified composure of the young man who now followed Eulalie into the salon.

Handsome he decidedly was, but he wanted the frank, open expression of youth, and there was a reserve in his manners looks and speech, a sort of calculating caution, that seemed to throw a veil over his own thoughts and feelings, while he keenly analyzed those of others. Such was the impression he made upon Isabelle at first sight, and which a further acquaintance only served to confirm. That Eulalie liked him, although so very dissimilar to herself in every way, Isabelle saw at a glance, and yet she felt

satisfied that Madame d' Anglures and Josephine were perfectly blind to this preference. But that Pierre Delamare had any attachment for Eulalie, was what she could not at all fathom, although her love and anxiety for her little friend made her study him narrowly.

Notwithstanding, however, these nice observations of Isabelle, the general opinion was, that two years' absence from the province had wonderfully improved Delamare. His polished manners and agreeable conversation, shewed that he had mixed in the best society, while it could easily be perceived, by the learning and erudition he displayed, when the conversation was turned upon scientific or learned points, by two or three old Abbés, who joined their evening circle, that his studies had been severe and classical, and to all these advantages, he united an eloquent delivery, and a fine flow of language, when he chose, that was sure to captivate his hearers.

He did not, however, captivate Isabelle, who,

occupied in watching Eulalie, saw, with some pain, that her little favourite hung upon the words of Delamare, as if they had been so many oracles. It is certainly true, that he was the lion of the party, and that Madame d'Anglures, Josephine, and all their guests, listened to him with unwearied attention; but Isabelle read, in the glowing cheek and speaking countenance of Eulalie, the gratified pride that one feels, in the triumph of a beloved object.

“Eulalie thinks of nothing but Delamare,” said Isabelle, with a sigh, as she laid her head upon her pillow, “and it grieves me to the heart; for if he ever did feel affection for her, worldly pursuits and pleasures have stifled the sentiment in his bosom, yet he must have made her believe so, one time or other.”

And Eulalie? Eulalie seated herself on the side of her couch, in her own little apartment, and as she slowly unbound the braids of her beautiful hair, she thus soliloquized,—

“Pierre has had no opportunity to speak

much to me to-day, but I am certain he loves me. Have not his eyes, his manner, told me so a thousand and a thousand times! Yes, I know I may rely upon his faith and truth entirely. That last sad evening, before he went to Paris—it was the close of a fête day, and we walked to the top of the Côte de Grace, to see what was going on—Ah; I remember it as if it were but yesterday—I stole away, as I thought unperceived, from mama and Josephine, into the little chapel, to hang up a votive offering for him, and to say a prayer, when I heard a step behind me, and was startled at beholding Pierre—did he not take my hand—did he not say to me:—

“ ‘ Eulalie, when I am far away, hundreds of the youth of the province will sue for this dear hand, and thou wilt forget me, Eulalie—but, Eulalie, dear Eulalie—’ Ah! what would he not have said then, had not Josephine come running in, to tell us that the fireworks were just begun, and seizing my arm, drew me

away—yes, I know his heart is mine, and once he looked at me so tenderly to-day. How often has he said to me:—‘Eulalie, when thou art absent, nothing is fair or beautiful in mine eyes!’—It is true, he is changed and become grave, but he is now a student, and can puzzle the good Abbot himself. Yes, I am sure he loves me!’”

Thus did Eulalie try to silence the vague fears of her little heart, and as she spoke, a large tear drop rolled down her cheek, but she soon fell asleep, and dreamed of Pierre, and how he walked with them through the forest glades, as in former times, and in the morning, when she awoke, she was gay and light-hearted as the lark.

Pierre Delamare was an orphan and cousin to Madame d’Anglures three degrees removed. His mother had been her dearest friend and the young Delamare had always been a welcome guest at her house. His small patrimony in the neighbourhood, husbanded by a

careful guardian, and of which he would shortly come into possession, rendered him a suitable match for any young maiden in the province who had a small dowry of her own. A more worldly minded mother than Madame d'Anglures would have taken all these circumstances into account and have built upon them accordingly; but Madame d'Anglures, happy in the society of her daughters who were still very young, always tried to banish from her mind any idea of the possibility of her being separated from either of them, and having been always accustomed to feel for young Delamare the interest of a mother, forgot that a warmer sentiment than that of a brother might attach him to Josephine or Enlalie.

Josephine was not pretty but she was good and gentle, and having been always used to see the charming lively little Eulalie who was two years younger than herself, the caressed and petted of every one, it did not occur to her as anything remarkable that Pierre should

always present the handsomest bouquets and finest fruits to her pretty sister, or carry Eulalie in his arms across the streams, when as children they rambled together, while he permitted her to pick her way over the stepping stones as well as she could.

Yet unconscious as Madame d'Anglures and Josephine were of it, Pierre Delamare *did* love Eulalie d'Anglures better than anything in the world before he went to Paris—but two years had made a great alteration in the thoughts and day dreams of Pierre—another and a powerful passion was beginning, nay indeed had already made a great progress in his bosom, and ambition had, during the last year in particular, nearly erased the image of Eulalie from his heart. A new impulse had been given to all the powers and energies of his mind. Until the last year or two, he was ignorant of his own capabilities, now he knew that he had eloquence to enchain the attention of the multitude, whether he became a public speaker

. . .

at the bar or in the pulpit, with genius to master the most abstruse studies, and he determined to win for himself both wealth and fame. His godfather who was Archbishop of —, and whom he had lately seen, had again urged him strenuously to enter into the church, promising him assistance and patronage, and though Delamare had formerly rejected this advice, he now listened to it with far different feelings, and already a vision of unbounded influence and high distinction, as a celebrated preacher, with an admiring audience in the foreground, and a dim perspective of a cardinal's hat in the distance, floated before the mind's eye of the ambitious youth. From the picture of an obscure gentleman, residing in a distant province, surrounded by an humble peasantry and a few country neighbours, unable to appreciate what he considered the high powers of his mind, he turned away with disgust, and he had now come to the Chateau d'Anglures with the intention of shewing the innocent Enlalie

by the easy indifference and coldness of his deportment towards her, that the passionate love of the boy, was entirely obliterated from the heart of the man.

Nevertheless, he had reckoned too much upon his own self-possession, and upon the power which the new view of life he had taken would have in controlling his feelings—and too little upon the increasing loveliness and fascination of the artless Eulalie. The undissembled joy that sparkled in her eyes...the unwearied attention with which she hung upon his accents, while they flattered his vanity gave a sharp pang to his heart, and before the close of the first day of his visit to the Chateau d'Anglures, he sincerely repented that he had dared to venture there. On the morning after his arrival he rose before the dawn, and wandered to the top of the Côte de Grace—there everything recalled to him the image of Eulalie, and the last few moments he spent alone with her in

the Chapel, on the evening before he went to Paris.

“How fortunate,” thought he, “that Josephine came running in at that instant, when I was on the point of swearing an eternal love to Eulalie—No, I am not bound to her by any vows—I am free—yet she is beautiful, and she loves me—How dangerous!—but why should it be dangerous?—Have I not made up my mind—Yes, I must forget Eulalie—Ah! once I often said to myself, one day she will be mine—but to give up everything—power, honour, rank, wealth—No, I can never do it—What is love when placed in the scale with those bright hopes!—but Eulalie—no I cannot leave her yet—I may see her, converse with her, walk with her as of yore—remembrance!—why cannot I tear thee from my heart?—but I know my own strength, and I will not commit myself.”

Thus reasoned Pierre Delamare.

Isabelle remained a week at the Chateau

d'Anglures, where Delamare still continued a guest, and all the time narrowly watched his behaviour to Eulalie, and thought that he even paid her less attention than he did to Josephine. Nevertheless, Eulalie looked bright and happy, and Isabelle, convinced more than ever of her decided partiality for him, felt that she herself, had she been in her place, could not have been satisfied with so cold a lover. And yet at last she began to fancy, that he must love Eulalie, for two or three times she caught his eyes, when he appeared to think he was quite unobserved, gazing on her with evident admiration, and one particular morning she had seen in the maiden's hand a white rose, which Eulalie hastily pressed to her lips, and then hid within her bosom.

“He must have given it to her,” thought Isabelle, “yet I like him not—he is neither candid or honest—why not, if he loves her, ask her hand in marriage of Madame d'Anglures—He will be his own master in a few months.”

Two days before Isabelle left the Chateau

she accompanied Madame d'Anglures, Josephine, Eulalie, and Delamare to a ball given by the Provost of the neighbouring town. It was very crowded, for all the gentry had been asked for ten leagues round. Among them all there was not one so lovely and gay as Eulalie d'Anglures, nor any, who at first enjoyed the dance with more vivid delight; but before the end of the evening Isabelle observed, that a cloud had overcast her happy face. Pierre Delamare had danced once with her, and then, with his usual caution, had refrained from asking her again; yet, although he did not choose to pay her any particular attention himself, he was inwardly mortified and enraged at seeing the eldest son of the Provost—a young man, who, without being handsome, had a good figure and an open and ingenuous countenance—dance with her several times, and apparently entertain her very agreeably with his animated conversation.

This secret chagrin had given a moroseness

to the manner of Pierre which he could not at all conceal, and on her making some lively remark to him in passing by the spot where he stood, his answer was so ungracious as to bring tears into her eyes.

Poor Eulalie was pale and spiritless, and complained of head-ache the next morning. Whatever point they might have disagreed upon however, it seemed to be all made up in the course of that day and Eulalie looked as bright and beautiful as ever in the evening. A soft word, a look, a flower was all that her young and trusting spirit demanded, and with the sophistry of woman's passionate, disinterested love, he had been excused by her confiding heart in the wakeful reverie of the night, and the fault entirely attributed to some inadvertent word or action of her own. Could Pierre Delamare love her less than she loved him—or could he ever be in the wrong—her heart responded—never.

Yet all the time that Eulalie felt this devoted love for Delamare, she was certain that

no eye, not even his, could read her secret sentiments and sometimes she thought within herself,

“ Ah, it is Pierre’s uncertainty as to the state of my affections now, that prevents his being more explicit to me, and he does not like to ask my mother’s consent, until he is entirely a free agent.

The following day was a fair day at Honfleur and groups were collected in every direction upon the acclivities and summit of the beautiful Côte de Grace which commanded a view of Havre, with its forest of masts on the opposite side of the bay, and of the embouchure of the Seine, while on the other side it looked into a deep romantic valley. No one who has ever been on the top of the Côte de Grace can forget the exquisite combination of marine and inland scenery which may be seen from every
o’ view .

It was towards the evening of this day that the party assembled at the Chateau d’Anglures,

wich two or three visitors who had been spending the day there, might have been seen ascending with loitering steps, the road which tortuously wound up one side of the Côte and pausing every now and then, to gaze upon the calm mirror-like bay, and to enjoy the gay spectacle around them.

Here, peasants dressed in their holiday garb—that charming picturesque attire which rivets the eye of the stranger who comes from a land where all ape the costume of the higher ranks of society, were singing and dancing as if they had not a care upon earth, to the sound of a *cornemuse* which an old man, elevated upon an empty barrel played with untiring energy. There, theatricals were performing in the open air, while close by, in a natural alcove of the rock, refreshments were preparing, and on every side wares of various kinds were displayed in the most tempting disorder—some beneath tents, others spread out upon the grass.

In short it seemed as if every one, even the poor lace makers, had laid aside their work and bid adieu to thought, determined upon having at least one day of uninterrupted enjoyment in their lives.

Among the group, who formed the gay pedestrian party, thus ascending the Côte, and enjoying the delicious sea-breeze and perfumed air, together with the sight of so much merriment and hilarity, was the son of the Provost of Honfleur, Henri Desguy by name, and the same who had excited the secret jealousy of Pierre Delamare the night of the ball, by dancing so much with Eulalie. Isabelle observed, that this youth would willingly have engrossed the conversation of Eulalie, that his eyes wandered after her incessantly, and that he was visibly mortified, at the pertinacity with which she avoided walking beside him. Josephine, on the contrary, evinced, by her heightened colour whenever he addressed her, that what-

ever his attentions might be to Eulalie, they were not at all indifferent to her, and weary at last, of trying to amuse or interest, the apparently volatile Eulalie, the young man joined himself to the group, of which Josephine made one, and being really very agreeable, kept them in unceasing merriment by his droll remarks.

Delamare attached himself entirely to Madame d'Anglures, and an elderly lady who accompanied her, while Eulalie kept close to Isabelle; chatting, laughing, amused with, and admiring everything, but what attracted her more than all besides, was a little female ballad singer—a Bretonne, whose crimson handkerchief, surmounted by a snow white chemisette, dark green jacket, short petticoat, and little apron, of pale violet colour, set off wonderfully, her small and delicate figure, while her gold earrings and picturesque head-dress, with the gold chain and cross suspended round her neck, and her tiny shoes, orna-

mented with large silver buckles, gave an air of elegance to her whole appearance.

Eulalie sprang forward to arrest her steps and to purchase some of her wares, and succeeded in obtaining two or three ballads, but so pretty was the little Bretonne, that her whole stock was nearly exhausted, no one having allowed her to pass, without purchasing something.

“Where are your parents, or are you all alone in the fair, my little maiden?” said Eulalie to the young girl, who did not appear more than twelve years of age.

“I am an orphan, Mademoiselle,” replied the girl, “and I and my little brother live with our grandfather, and accompany him from fair to fair. There he is yonder, an old, blind man, playing the *cornemuse*.”

And the child pointed to the performer, who was seated on the top of the empty barrel.

“ And that is my little brother, standing beside him, with the dog.”

“ And what is your name?” demanded Eulalie.

“ Angelique,” replied the girl. “ I sell ballads, and Jean and the dog take care of my grandfather.”

“ Your grandfather is not very poor, I hope!” said Eulalie.

“ Oh, no!” replied the child, “ he gets a great deal of money at the fairs, and often we spend a week together in some farmhouse, and we go to all the weddings...but Jean beckons me, and I must get my grandfather his supper.”

So saying, the pretty Bretonne dropped a curtsey, and hastened away.

At length the deepening twilight warned them that it was time to depart, and Henri Desguey, volunteering to shew the party a short way back to the Chateau, led them towards the steepest side of the Côte, which

presented a rugged and almost perpendicular descent, by a narrow path through a thick cover of copse-wood, down the declivity. The moon and the stars shone brightly, through the tangled branches above their heads, and the glowworms, emulating the stars in brightness, sparkled among the dewy grass and the wild flowers, whose sweetness, drawn forth by the night air, shed a delicious perfume at their feet.

The gay little party, however, found their way without much difficulty. The old Provost escorted Isabelle; and Eulalie, who was the last that entered the path, found, with a throbbing heart, that Pierre Delamare, who had stood aloof all the evening was at her side.

With what words he more than ever bound her trusting young heart to his, we will not seek to discover. Perchance we might find it was but a sigh, a pressure of the hand, a half-uttered sentence. It is sufficient to know that

he did not ask permission to demand her hand of her mother—he did not say Eulalie, I love thee! No—Pierre Delamare had never made an open avowal of his love; and yet Eulalie laid her head upon her pillow that night, convinced that his whole heart was hers alone.

Nevertheless Pierre Delamare spent a watchful night himself. He felt that with his present intention of entering the church, he was acting madly in thus delaying at the Chateau d' Anglures. The sharp fit of jealousy which had seized him at the ball, on perceiving the gay and lively deportment of Eulalie towards young Desguey, had shewed him that he was not so much the master of his own heart as he had imagined, and he now could not help acknowledging to himself that had their walk down that fairy-lit pathway been of much longer duration, he would have been tempted to forget his ambitious hopes, and all the world, and have bound himself to his lovely little companion by spoken vows; and he congratulated himself that

he had escaped this dangerous temptation. But he never thought what might be the effect of his vacillating behaviour upon the happiness and peace of mind of Eulalie.

“If I had a hundred thousand francs a-year, instead of twenty thousand,” he mentally exclaimed, “I would, without a doubt, marry Eulalie, and think no more of the Archbishop’s promises, but in the present state of things it is impossible.”

Early on the following morning Delamare left the Chateau d’Anglures, and in the course of the same day the Baroness de Montfort, accompanied by Eulalie, returned to her own home.

CHAPTER VI.

Let me confess that we two must be twain
Although our undivided loves are one :
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a seperable spite ;
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.

Shakspeare.

It is now time that we should return to the Baron de Montfort, and see what became of him after his ill-starred marriage with Isabelle.

Our readers will remember, that we left him, with a small party of attendants, at a few leagues distance from Paris, taking a different road from the one that Isabelle was travelling. His intention was to proceed with all speed to Vienna, and from thence to take the route to Constantinople, there to join his uncle, who was Ambassador at that Court.

His separation from Clementine on the preceeding day had been passionate and absorbing. A thousand times he vowed never to feel attachment for another, and a thousand times, cold and calculating as she was, did she apparently respond to his affection... We say apparently; for while his love was true and undisguised, she, volatile and incapable of a real attachment, began to be terrified at his despair, and, while she promised eternal friendship and a constant correspondence by letter, felt that whatever preference she might have had for him was already nearly vanished, and that she must now look around, as the old

Marquis, her husband, was declining very fast, and try to attract some other nobleman, a marriage with whom, would still give her a place at Court; as otherwise, on the death of the Marquis, her very insignificant jointure would oblige her to retire immediately into the country. Such were the thoughts that flashed across her mind while the young Baron poured forth his unfeigned regrets.

The Marchioness de Varville was one of those women who, with a large share of vanity and a cold, intriguing temperament, delight in being the object of a serious passion, while hedged round themselves, not by principle, but by an incapability, from a profound selfishness of character, of feeling any real attachment, can stand on the brink of the precipice without the least danger of falling.

Travelling and change of scene mitigated in some degree, the distraction of the Baron, nevertheless the image of Clementine was ever uppermost in his mind. He arrived at Vienna

without meeting with anything worthy of narration, and from thence travelled through Hungary to Temeswar, a strong fortress on the frontier, being accompanied only by his valet, François la Porte, the other attendants proceeding more slowly with his baggage. At Hermanstadt, finding that his luggage train was far behind, he left the valet to await its arrival, appointing *Rothenthurm*, or the Red Tower, as the place of rendezvous, proposing to remain there till they should join him, and took himself his solitary way towards the above mentioned place, which was not far distant from the passage into Wallachia over the Carpathian mountains.

Transylvania was at this period divided into different Palatinates, each one governed by its own prince or chief. It is surrounded on all sides by high mountains, which seem to shut it out from the rest of the world. Following the windings of a rapid river, the Baron rode on for some time without interruption. He had

been informed on entering Transylvania, that it was at this time a prey to intestine divisions in consequence of the recent death of one of the native Princes or Palatines; that the accession belonged of right to Una his only child and heiress, but that it was contested with her by two pretenders—One, the nephew of the deceased Palatine, was willing to wave what he considered his claim, and join his interests with hers by a marriage; and it was said, that the dying Palatine, foreseeing what evils were likely to accrue on his death, had betrothed her to him—the other, a Wallachian Chieftain, determined to get possession of her territory, put forth no other claim than what a large armed force of his own, assisted by a troop of mercenaries, might give him—Indeed Hermanstadt, where he, the Baron, had past the night, gave evidence to the truth of this account, as there seemed to be sentinels placed upon its ramparts, and proofs in the bustle and hurry of the good citizens of the town before the dawn.

ing of the day, that they did not feel themselves quite at their ease.

De Montfort, however, saw and heard all these testimonies of the insecure state of the country without giving any heed to them, being naturally of a fearless disposition, and from the mood he was in, coveting a solitary ride through the wild and magnificent scenery, which now opened on his view as he turned his horse's head in the direction of the celebrated pass of the Rothenthurm, and beheld, far over topping the pine forests, the Carpathian mountains whose lofty glaciers were tinted by the rising sun with a thousand colours as bright as they were fleeting.

The Baron, throwing the bridle upon the neck of his steed, pursued a horse track along the bank of the river, which he understood would bring him, towards the close of day, to the Red tower. He had proceeded at a slow pace for several leagues, occupied by a thousand melancholy ideas, yet with more calmness,

and less weight upon his spirits than he had felt since leaving Paris ; the songs of birds, the rustling of the leaves, the soft murmuring of wind and water, and above all, the perfect loneliness that surrounded him, soothing, softening, and allaying the regrets in which he indulged.

The valleys, hills, and surrounding country had disappeared from his eyes, the river now winding through a thick covert of pine trees, and underwood, whose branches sometimes crossing the path, obliged him to alight and lead his horse.

As De Montfort was thus leisurely proceeding on foot, his reveries were suddenly interrupted by the sound of voices, which seemed not to be far off, and on turning an angle made by a projecting rock, he perceived five ruffianly looking soldiers in a thicket hard by, partaking of some coarse refreshment. On observing him they immediately sprung up, and seizing their swords, which lay on the

grass beside them, desired him, in barbarous German, to stand and deliver up his purse and arms.

De Montfort who was brave even to rashness, seeing that he must either surrender or defend himself, answered their demand by placing his back against the rock, and drawing a loaded pistol from his breast, declared, in German, which he spoke very fluently, that he would fire at the first who approached. A loud shout of derision was their reply, as they simultaneously hastened forward. The report of a pistol was immediately heard, and the foremost ruffian fell upon the ground, while De Montfort, throwing away the pistol, and being a capital swordsman, defended himself with great skill against the other four.

Nevertheless, the combat being so unequal, he must inevitably, in the end, have fallen a sacrifice to their fury, had not a young man in the Greek military costume, and apparently, from his habiliments, of a rank above the

soldiers, at this moment approached, and seeing a young stranger set upon by four men, loudly called upon them to desist.

The infuriated soldiers, however, paid no regard to his orders and menaces, one of them turning round and declaring that they were not under his command, and that they were all resolved to avenge the death of their comrade.

The Greek, who was rapidly advancing, came up as the soldier had finished his reply, and making use of his sword with vigour and dexterity, so ably assisted De Montfort that the ruffians were soon put to flight, but not without their having received some severe wounds. De Montfort was but slightly injured, notwithstanding the unequal number he had had to contend with; and warmly thanking his deliverer, told him his name and rank, and how it happened that he was alone and without attendants in that solitary spot.

The Greek, in return, informed him that he himself was called Ivan, and that he was captain

of a troop of mercenaries, who had taken service with Count Herman. He likewise added that parties of soldiers were straying about in various directions, waiting until a hasty marriage should be solemnized between the Lady Una and her cousin Count Maurice, and that the latter on receiving the hand of the maiden from her guardian, Count Herman, was to proceed immediately at the head of his and her vassals, assisted by Count Herman, against a neighbouring Wallachian chieftain, who was on his way with the intention of besieging her castle.

“The Lady Una doth not affect this marriage,” continued the Greek, “and hath delayed the celebration of it from day to day, to the great displeasure of Count Maurice, who is of an imperious and selfish disposition. He is a dark-browed and revengeful-looking chieftain, and beshrew me if he is worthy so fair a bride. Her father, wounded to the death in a skirmish on the frontier, died about three

months ago in his Castle, which is but a league distant from the entrance of this forest. Finding his last moments approaching fast, he sent express to Hermanstadt, for his friend Count Herman, and appointing him guardian of the Lady Una, made him swear upon the cross and his good sword, to see her united to Count Maurice, her cousin, hoping, by this means, to secure her the peaceable possession of the territory he bequeathed her, and which Count Maurice claimed, though without any legal right to it, as male heir."

"And Count Herman—has he fulfilled the oath he took to the dying Palatine?" inquired De Montfort.

"Count Herman is the soul of honour," replied Ivan, "and though enchanted with the beauty of the Lady Una, who he now beheld for the first time since her childhood, as he had been several years in the service of a foreign Prince, has done all in his power to expedite this marriage, but the Lady Una,

who had always disliked Count Maurice, struck by the contrast between him and Count Herman, who in person, is as handsome and noble-looking, as he is generous and chivalric in disposition, now, more than ever, hated her cousin, answering all his haughty demands for their immediate union, with tears and sighs, and would in truth, never have consented to it, had she not at last been wrought upon, by the earnest entreaties of her guardian, to whose heart, it is suspected, the marriage will give as keen a pang, as to that of the unfortunate maiden."

As Ivan finished this recital, they emerged from the forest, and beheld before them, on the acclivity of an opposite hill, a church, apparently much dilapidated, round which were loitering several small parties of soldiers, while in the distance, might be seen the towers of the Lady Una's Castle.

"It must be about the time the ceremony

should commence," said Ivan. "Suppose we climb the hill, and enter the church."

To this proposition, De Montfort willingly consented, and the Greek, beckoning to one of his own troop, who happened to be at a short distance, and desiring him to hold the Baron's horse, they ascended the hill by a rugged path, and entering the church by a side door, placed themselves behind one of the pillars, at no great distance from the altar, from whence, secure themselves from observation, they could see all that was going on.

The aisle of the church was filled with armed knights and soldiers, and through a narrow gothic window, close by to where he stood, De Montfort could perceive, in a valley, towards which he looked, a glittering of arms and waving of colours, as if a large body of soldiers were encamped there.

A priest, arrayed in his sacred vestments, stood

beside the altar, while before him knelt a youth of about four or five-and-twenty years of age, whose coarse features, flushed face, and angry brow, gave him more the air of a captain of banditti than that of a Transylvanian nobleman, and near the youth knelt a maiden of exquisite loveliness, but with a cheek and lip as colourless as monumental marble, resembling some beautiful statue of despair fresh from the chisel of an ancient sculptor, so still, so hopeless was the expression of her countenance. She had apparently but just attained the verge of womanhood, and like an early snow-drop, which some careless hand has plucked and thrown away, seemed blighted before her charms were half unfolded. Standing behind her, and bending as it were over her, was the form of a knight in complete armour—His stately figure, and powerfully though symmetrical proportions, proclaimed him to have attained the most perfect age of manhood, but his bent

head was shaded by his cap and plume, and only the profile of his noble countenance could be seen.

“How pale the Lady Una looks!” whispered Ivan. “I wot she would far rather have Death for her bridegroom than Count Maurice—I like him not—he is of a fiery and revengeful spirit, and will lock her up in a dungeon if she shows any coldness towards him after marriage. That noble knight, who stands behind her with his plumed cap pulled over his brow, and his eyes fixed upon the ground, is Count Herman, he it is who, as her guardian, must give away her hand. I would plunge a dagger in the heart of my Anastasia sooner than thus bestow her on another.”

“What! and break your oath,” replied De Montfort, in the same low tone.

“Death should cancel my oath,” returned Ivan, “I would kill her first, and then myself.”

During this short colloquy the ceremony had

begun, and soon the moment arrived when Count Herman was to give away the bride.

As the Knight raised his head De Montfort caught a glimpse of his face. He was deadly pale, and cold drops of perspiration stood upon his brow—the veins of his forehead seemed swelled with intense agony, and his lip quivered with suppressed emotion—Yes! he loved her himself—he knew that he was beloved, yet honour compelled him to give her hand to Count Maurice.

Once only had she raised her eyes to his since they had entered the church—one despairing, hopeless, entreating look—De Montfort perceived that look—he saw that Count Herman had averted his head, and that she had not dared to look at him again—Alas! poor Una knew not that his anguish was as deep, if not deeper than her own; but she felt that his fingers were as cold as the marble on which she knelt, when, taking her small hand in his, he gave away what he most prized upon earth.

The ceremony is over—Count Maurice takes a cold and hurried farewell of his almost inanimate bride, who surrounded immediately by her female attendants is conveyed to the castle, while knights and soldiers hastily leaving the church prepare at once to march towards the pass of the Rothenthurm, hoping, by a sudden surprise, to intercept the Wallachian Chieftain on his entrance into Transylvania, and by one decisive conflict to put an end to the frequent invasions and skirmishes which had taken place of late.

On alighting from the litter in which she had been carried to her castle, the Lady Una retired into her own apartment in the deepest despondency, not even her nurse, who had long been in the pay of Count Maurice, was admitted; and here she remained alone all that day and night, a thousand vague and fearful thoughts crossing her imagination. She knew that Count Maurice would not, in all probability, return to the castle until the latter end of the

following day, and she was determined to have the intermediate time to herself to give free vent to the anguish of her soul.

The spirits of the air and of the waters that wandered in the pine forests around, pitied her despair, and paused to listen to her lamentations, as, outwatching the stars, she sat in her turret window, and looked out upon the wild forests, and the distant hills, and into the dark waters of the Aluta which flowed beneath the castle walls.

Hear the lament of the lady Una, as her sighs were borne on the night wind.

“ Fain would I hide from thee for ever !

A love so crost ;

I would not that thou should'st discover,

How I am lost.

Lost !—yes, for I have madly given

My heart, unsought—

My maiden pride—my hopes are riven,

And low are brought.

What reck's it in whose eyes I fair shone,

Since not in thine ?

Tho' true and faithful hearts I have won,
I gave not mine.
And many deem'd that earthly passion,
Could ne'er move me,
So cold I heard each fond confession—
'T was not from thee.
A melancholy tint is shading,
My once calm brow—
To ashy hue my cheek is fading :
Must I live now !
When twilight heav'n and earth is veiling,
Pensive I stray :
What thoughts are in my bosom stealing,
I dare not say."

CHAPTER VII.

Well mote ye wonder how that noble knight
After he had so often wounded been,
Could stand on foot now to renew the fight :
But, had ye then him forth advancing seen,
Some new-born wight ye would him surely ween ;
So fresh he seemed and so fierce in sight ;
Like as a snake, whom winter's teen
Hath worn to nought, now feeling summer's might,
Casts off his ragged skin and freshly doth him dight.
Spenser.

DE MONTFORT felt very melancholy on leaving the church. The ceremony he had just witnessed, brought forcibly before him his own

unwished-for marriage with Isabelle, and to dissipate those disagreeable retrospections, he determined to join the party he had fallen in with, and proceed with them against the Wallachians.

The young Greek heard his resolution with much pleasure; and telling him that it was agreed that all the different companies should meet at a spot about the distance of three leagues from the church, proposed that they should ride thither in company, and that there he would introduce him to Count Herman, who, he had no doubt, would be proud of his friendship and assistance

This being arranged, and Ivan getting his troop together, they proceeded, at a pretty quick pace, towards the place of rendezvous, conversing all the way as they rode side by side.

There was a frank, open expression, in the young Greek's countenance, and a freedom and spirit in his demeanour, which, independent of the obligation he was under to him, made

De Montfort feel a lively interest in all that concerned him, and he did not therefore lose this opportunity, of eliciting from him some account of his past life, and asking a question or two about the young girl, for whom Ivan had avowed so strong an attachment.

His history was very simple. He was born in a little valley, close to the village of Umar Fakill, in the province of Roumelia. His father, who had been a Greek merchant, was still alive, and had purchased the spot of ground which he now employed himself in cultivating ; but as he had several children, among whom he intended to divide his small inheritance, Ivan, who was the youngest of them, early embraced the profession of arms, and becoming a soldier of fortune, endeavoured to make his own way in the world, and to enrich himself, sufficiently, so as to enable him, one day or other, to wed his Anastasia.

“ We have loved since childhood,” said the

young Greek, “but as yet we are too poor to marry; nevertheless, in a few years, I hope to return to her—then I will change my sword into a plough-share, and settling among my old friends and neighbours, and purchasing a field or two in the valley, will build a little cottage there, and live in peace and tranquillity with my Anastasia. Should we find ourselves very poor, I shall always have my sword as a resource, and then, during my absence, Anastasia will employ herself at her spinning and embroidery, and will watch and pray for my speedy return.”

“And is your Anastasia very beautiful,” enquired De Montfort.

“Yes,” replied the Greek, “lovely as is the Lady Una, my Anastasia is still lovelier. Could you have seen her, when she represented Flora in the May dances last year, her long black ringlets ornamented with the flowers I plucked for her, and her dark eyes radiant with joy and animation, you would have pro-

nounced her bewitching. There is no maiden in Roumelia, who can, in the least degree, compare with her, and all the youths have long envied me the possession of her heart."

Conversing in this manner, our travellers beguiled the way, until they reached the spot where the troops were assembled, of which Count Maurice commanded his own vassals and those of the Lady Una, while Count Herman led on his followers, and the Greeks, of which Ivan was Captain. The latter immediately introduced the young Baron to Count Herman, mentioning who he was, his adventure with the soldiers, and why he had been travelling without attendants. The Count received De Montfort with great urbanity, and hearing his intention was to accompany them, gladly accepted his assistance, saying that a single arm like his, was worth a troop of soldiers. De Montfort was much pleased with the air and manner of Count Herman, which bespoke at once the brave soldier and the

accomplished nobleman. His handsome countenance though grave, was calm and collected, and he looked like one, who, born to command the multitude, is perfect master over himself. De Montfort could scarcely think, it was across that serene and dignified brow, that he had seen the storm of passion fiercely sweep, with such devastating violence, a few hours before. So the blue ocean, after the whirlwind has passed away, conceals the abysses beneath its waves, and retains no traces of the tempest, that has perchance shipwrecked many a poor mariner.

The scouts, who had been sent forward through the pass of the Carpathian Mountains, were by this time returned, and reported that the Wallachians were encamped at the other side of the mountain, purposing to cross the river Olta Alp before the break of day. Count Maurice on being apprised of the enemy's position, determined to push on directly, and endeavour to surprise the camp in the early

part of the night. To this plan Count Herman was opposed, seeing that, after passing the river, the way was partly through a bog, and partly over deep ravines crossed by means of trunks of trees laid over them, and often along the edge of a precipice, and that by awaiting the arrival of their opponents on the banks of the Olta Alp, they would have them at a much greater advantage. To this advice, however, Count Maurice, who was hot-headed and self-opinionated, turned a deaf ear, and as much the largest proportion of the soldiers were under his command, proceeded immediately to put his own suggestions into practice by crossing the river, leaving Count Herman, who foresaw the probable result of his enterprise, with his own followers, and the Greek soldiers, to act as he thought fit.

The Wallachian force, which was large, having amongst them a great number of Turks, all accustomed to sudden skirmishes and surprises, were on the alert, and Count Maurice

paid the price of his rashness, by falling in the first *melée*, having had a Turkish sabre run through his body. His men retreated in great disorder, several of them being cut to pieces, while the Wallachians, thinking the entire body had come on, made sure of an easy victory, and of being speedily in possession of the Lady Una's castle. But in this expectation they found themselves egregiously disappointed; for although Count Herman had much difficulty in arresting any of the vassals of the Lady Una in their flight, yet as he was an officer of great skill himself, and being likewise well seconded by the dauntless bravery of De Montfort, and the courage of Ivan and his troop, he had managed to place his small body of men in so advantageous a position, commanding a ravine through which the Wallachians were obliged to pass in order to reach the Olta Alp, that, notwithstanding their numbers, they found it impossible to proceed, and were at last obliged to

retreat in great confusion beyond the mountains.

The body of Count Maurice, which had been brought away by his vassals, was now placed upon a bier hastily made of branches of trees for the purpose, and his scattered followers, now that all was over, being willing enough to obey Count Herman, were gathered together, and they all proceeded at a slow pace back in the direction of the Lady Una's castle, Count Herman having first besought De Montfort to turn his steps thither likewise, and partake of the hospitality of the Lady Una for a few days, until the funeral of Count Maurice should take place, when, as he himself should then return to his own castle near Hermanstadt, he would entreat him to become his guest, promising that he would show him some good sport in boar hunting.

To all these kind solicitations however De Montfort returned a negative for the present,

promising that at some future period he would not fail to recollect his invitation, and would come and spend a month with him, when he should greatly enjoy the promised amusement of boar hunting.

After many regrets at thus parting so soon, Count Herman bade them adieu, first insisting that the young Greek, with a portion of his men should remain with De Montfort at Rothenthurm until his attendants arrived, and should then escort them through the province of Wallachia, and as he would take no denial to this proposition, in which Ivan joyfully concurred, the Baron consented, and did so the more readily as it would give him a further opportunity of improving his acquaintance with Ivan, to whom, as we said before, he had taken a great liking.

They spent the intermediate time before the Baron's attendants arrived, in conversing of Count Herman and the Lady Una, and the probability of their being happily united when

the customary period of her mourning should have expired.

“The Lady Una will bring him a rich dowry,” said Ivan, “for the inheritance of Count Maurice will now be added to her own; and Count Herman, though brave and high minded, is poor. Truly it would rejoice my soul to see that lovely maiden kneel with him before the altar.—I felt their distress to my heart’s core, yesterday morning, when the noble Herman gave her away. Ah! I would wager anything, the rose will now soon re-visit her beautiful cheek and lip again.”

“Thou art poetical, good Ivan,” replied the Baron, scarcely suppressing a smile at his young friend’s enthusiasm, although he too was warmly interested in the future prospects of the lovers.

“Can anything be more dreadful,” inquired Ivan, with much energy, “than to marry one person and love another?”

The Baron started and changed colour at

this observation, which Ivan perceiving, expressed his fear that he was fatigued and unwell from the unceasing exertion of so many hours of travelling and fighting without any rest.

“It is a sudden spasm,” said the Baron, “but it will pass quickly. I think a little rest will be of service to me, and I will therefore lie down for half an hour beneath the shade of this tree.”

So saying, the Baron, wrapping his cloak around him, threw himself upon a green bank beside the stream by which they had been walking, and Ivan left him to his thoughts, but not to rest.

Nevertheless those meditations were of use to him. He reflected upon the power Count Herman had exercised over himself—upon his serene and dignified manner after having had passions so overwhelming to contend with, and he determined that it was much nobler for a man to stifle his regrets and hide them from the

world, than thus to allow himself to be the prey of unavailing melancholy. Wherefore when the young Greek appeared again, he received him with a cheerful, unconstrained manner, which led him to suppose that in reality he had been only fatigued.

In the course of half an hour more François and the rest of the Baron's attendants arrived. It was now mid-day, and they had time to travel several leagues before evening, so, after partaking of some refreshment, they left Ruthen-thurm, and De Montfort with Ivan, who had taken the precaution of sending on a small party of his men before them to see that the way was clear of any stragglers, proceeded leisurely side by side through the steep mountain tracks which led into the neighbouring province of Wallachia.

They were in hopes of being able to reach a small village at the foot of the mountain on the Wallachian side before the close of day, but in this they were disappointed as the passage over

the mountains proved much more rugged and intricate than they had reckoned upon, besides which, in order to avoid some of the deep ravines where they knew the rude bridges, made by trunks of trees thrown across, had been destroyed during the late skirmish, they had made a *detour* which added to the length of the way, so that twilight found them on a wild acclivity skirting the edge of a precipitous glen or rather clift in the mountain, at the bottom of which the roaring of a torrent was heard as it leaped from crag to crag

The sides of this ravine were clothed with a thick wood, from whence immense masses of bare rock protruded, but the shelter of even a bush was denied to our travellers, as the spot on which they stood, was a stony waste appearing to stretch out interminably around them, and showing only a scanty covering of moss and coarse grass. The horses being quite fatigued and unable to proceed any further, it became necessary to consider how they were to

pass the night. De Montfort and Ivan, who had led their horses for several miles, as the paths were too rugged, and the footing too uncertain to permit of their riding, were in deep consultation as to what they had best do, while a thick wetting rain rendered their situation anything but agreeable, when they perceived a child of about four years old suddenly make his appearance on the edge of the ravine carrying in his arms a bundle of sticks much larger than himself, and then as suddenly disappear again.

Hastening towards the spot where they had seen the child, De Montfort and Ivan looked narrowly around for some track or pathway, and it was not until after a long search that they at length discovered a narrow cleft at the edge of the ravine between two rocks, from whence a natural flight of uneven steps seemed to wind down amongst the underwood for a considerable way.

Descending this precipitous path for some hundred feet, they at length heard the sound of

human voices mingling with the noise of the rushing stream beneath, and soon arrived at a species of platform or open space midway down the side of the precipice partly overhung with rocks, partly shaded by large beech trees which had pushed forth their roots in every direction where a fissure in the rock offered them the slightest nourishment.

This space, which was about one hundred feet in diameter, presented to their view a small encampment of gipseys, who looked with as much amazement upon our travellers, as if they had been beings of another world.

Ivan, who could speak the dialect of the country intelligibly, explained to them how they were benighted on the mountain, and where they had left their horses and attendants. upon which an old man, who seemed to be the head of the party, immediately offered them what poor accommodation they could afford, proposing to give up one of the tents for their use, and to send some of his people to assist in

finding some more sheltered spot for the horses and attendants to remain in, than where they were at present. Our travellers received this proffered hospitality with many thanks, and the old man then informed them that they were a small party belonging to a large body of gipseys encamped at some leagues' distance, who had located themselves for the present in this solitary spot, in order to search for gold dust in the mountain torrents.

The women and children had run to hide themselves on the first appearance of the strangers leaving only the old man, and two or three swarthy looking youths to receive them. Their host now dispatched one of the youths to the moor to make arrangements for the men and horses, and pressed De Montfort and Ivan to partake with him of some supper which was nearly ready. To this they willingly consented, and the old man led the way into a recess of the rock beyond the tents, where the light of a blazing fire was increased by torches of pine

wood, placed upon a rude table formed of planks supported by fragments of stone. Two or three savoury dishes made of the wild boar's flesh were presently served up by a dark-eyed gipsey girl, who eyed the strangers with much curiosity, particularly Ivan upon whom she threw many a bewitching glance, but he had his head too much filled with thoughts of his Anastasia, as he had got leave from Count Herman to pay a flying visit to his parents before he should return into Transylvania, to see beauty in any black eyes but hers. When the repast was laid upon the table they were joined by a remarkably, striking looking female of about six or eight and twenty years of age, leading by the hand the little boy who had first attracted the travellers to the edge of the precipice. Her complexion, dark almost as an Ethiopian's, was agreeably relieved by a crimson silk hood thrown over her jetty hair, while a dark cloth jacket, open at the neck and bosom, and embroidered at the seams, with a petticoat

striped in various colours, set off her figure to the best advantage. Her air was almost majestic, and De Montfort observed that the old man gazed on her with equal pride and pleasure. This latter soon informed his guests, that she was his daughter, and that her late husband, now dead about two years, had been King of their tribe. He likewise expressed a hope, that his little grandson might one day arrive at the same high honour.

When the repast was over, De Montfort and Ivan were glad to retire and repose themselves upon the benches prepared for them in one of the tents, and after sleeping profoundly for some hours, rose at the break of day, and finding their kind host already up, hastened to take their leave offering him their thanks, and presenting him with some pieces of gold as a recompense for his hospitality. This gratuity, however, the old man proudly declined accepting, upon which, De Montfort seeing the little boy peeping out of one of the tents called him

towards him, and taking off a gold chain which fastened the hilt of his sword, put it on the child, bidding him wear it when he should be King of the gipseys. The old gipsey's eyes sparkled with delight, and the boy's mother approaching took De Montfort's hand and pressed it to her lips, then still retaining it she scanned the lines in it attentively, and after perusing them for some moments, murmured in a low voice in good German :

“ Forsaken by the loved one—loved by the forsaken !”

De Montfort started—then a look of incredulity passed over his brow while Zanina, for such was her name, casting a reproachful look at him, as if to reprove his want of faith, turned to Ivan, who very reluctantly allowed her to take his hand. After tracing the lines for an instant, she said to him encouragingly :

“ Sorrow comes when on the brink of happiness, but the spirit must not sink.”

Then making them an oriental obeisance she

retired within the tent leading her child by the hand, who proud of the gift bestowed on him, continued to examine it with every mark of admiration.

The morning was bright and unclouded, the attendants, who conducted thither by the young gipsey, had passed the night in a cave not far off, were all in readiness to start, and the party proceeded for five or six days without any further interruption. Being come to the confines of Roumelia Ivan bade De Montfort adieu, with many regrets at parting, and hopes of meeting at some future period, while the latter pursued his way towards Constantinople, whose oriental battlements, domes and minarets appearing through long lines of cypress trees, at last burst upon his sight, lighted up by the gorgeous splendour of a setting sun.

CHAPTER VIII.

Such is the weakness of all mortal hope ;
So fickle is the state of earthly things,
That ere they come into their aimed scope.
They fall so short of their frail reckonings,
And bring us bale and bitter sorrowings,
Instead of comfort which we should embrace.
This is the state of Cæsars and of kings.
Let therefore none that is in meaner place,
Too greatly grieve at any his unlucky case.

Spenser.

ARRIVED at Constantinople, De Montfort was received with open arms by his uncle the ambassador who, nevertheless, looked very grave when he heard of his nephew's reasons for so

speedily accepting his invitation and leaving all the gaieties of Paris, as until he heard it now from his own lips, he had had no intimation of De Montfort's marriage. However as it was of no avail, under the present circumstances, to read him a lecture on the madness of thus giving way to the impulse of the moment and neglecting so richly dowried and so fair a bride as the King had bestowed upon him, the ambassador who was a man of great penetration and sound judgment, began immediately to consider how he could turn those unfortunate incidents to the advantage of his nephew, and being aware that the faults in his character were engendered by the indulgence of every wish to which he had been habituated from infancy and by the idle life he had led in a dissipated court, and knowing that he had naturally good inclinations and abilities of no common stamp, he determined if possible, to lure him to the study of politics and to such researches as might make him exert the powers

of his mind, and thus by providing him with ample employment, give him no time for the indulgence of wild fancies and futile regrets. He therefore made De Montfort his own private secretary determined that he should not find it a sinecure place.

Behold De Montfort now all at once immersed in the ocean of politics. The ambassador in the blandest and most affectionate manner in the world, had him perpetually at his elbow consulting him upon every point of difficulty and making him give due consideration to the most intricate affairs. Thus the Baron found himself, as if by enchantment, placed in a different situation to any he had ever yet been in, and what seemed more strange to himself was, that he felt somehow or other as if it was the sphere for which nature had originally intended him and that in short he had been all his life, while at court, living in a false position.

It was not that the image of Clementine was erased from his heart, or that he felt less

repugnance to his late marriage whenever the thought of it crossed his mind ; nevertheless, those memories were not now evermore present before him, but overpowered by new scenes, new pursuits, and the perpetual claims which his uncle made upon his time and thoughts, had gradually and imperceptibly receded from the conspicuous place, which they had at first possessed in his imagination. Still De Montfort was much chagrined, as time passed on and no letter arrived from Madame de Varville, in answer to the passionate epistles, he had sent her by every opportunity. Soon, however, this neglect seemed to be in some measure explained, by his hearing of the death of the old Marquis, her husband, which took place above a month after his own departure from Paris, and he laid her silence to the account of the agony she must feel, when she reflected, that but for his hated marriage with Isabelle, she was now free to bestow on him her hand.

“ Yes, when this first anguish is a little mitigated, Clementine will write to me,” thought he ; but month succeeded to month, still no letter came, and at length De Montfort began to be seriously uneasy, about the health of Madame de Varville. His rage and horror may, therefore, be more easily imagined than described, when one day, in looking over some public journals, just arrived from Paris, he read an account of the marriage of Clementine, Marchioness de Varville, with Philippe, Marquis de Varville, the heir and cousin of her late husband. To fully understand the feelings of the young Baron, it is necessary to state, that the present Marquis had always been considered as a most despicable character. Deformed in his person as in his mind, and a slave to every vice, none had ever disliked or appeared to condemn him, more than Clementine.

A marriage with so contemptible an individual, which could have been only formed

from the most interested motives, unmasked his, until now, dearly beloved mistress, and rudely tore away the bandage she had placed over the eyes of the Baron.

Perhaps there is no deception so galling to the proud heart of man, as the one De Montfort found he had been so long under—nor any sting more acute, than the thought of having squandered a world of affection upon an unworthy object.

The witty, the beautiful, the fascinating Clementine, to mate herself, for gold and rank, with a being he had heard her speak of a thousand times, in terms of opprobrium and ridicule!—but so it was, and De Montfort felt as if truth and love had vanished for ever from the world, leaving nothing but base counterfeits in their stead.

But those ruminations, though frequent and bitter at first, vanished by degrees, and De Montfort gave himself entirely to his new pursuits.

The country too, in which he was, rife with so many magical associations of eastern magnificence and antiquity, together with visions of imprisoned beauties and tyrant sultans, genii, and enchanted lakes and palaces, recalling the tales so greedily devoured in his boyhood, exercised a distracting power over his thoughts, and when the graver pursuits of politics, and studying languages were laid aside, and he had made the tour of all the palaces, bazaars, and mosques, and the beautiful cemetery of Pera, they were always at hand, to lure him into ever varying excursions, sometimes through the woods and valleys of Belgrade, at other times to float in a light caique, on the blue waters of the Bosphorus, or to visit the islands of the Propontis.

In this manner, time passed rapidly and agreeably on, and De Montfort could scarcely credit the possibility, of his having been nearly two years at Constantinople, when a letter arrived from his father, expressing much

regret at his long absence and telling him, that as he now felt himself growing old and infirm, it would be a great comfort to him to see his dear son, and entreating that he would not much longer delay his return to Paris.

De Montfort was too dutiful, not to acquiesce immediately in his father's wishes, nevertheless, he did so with some reluctance, particularly when he heard from a young official, just arrived, that he never saw the Count De Beaumont looking in better health and spirits, than he did, when on the evening preceding his departure from Paris, he met him in the Queen's drawing-room.

De Montfort was happy to hear of his father's good health, and wished that he could have spared him to remain with his uncle the Ambassador a little longer. Nevertheless it was very natural that an old man should desire to have his only child near him, so with a sigh De Montfort determined to leave Constantinople in the course of the following month, and pro-

ceeding by the same route through Transylvania, as that by which he had travelled before, manage to spend a few weeks at the castle of his friend Count Herman.

And now as the Baron meditated upon his return to Paris, the unwished-for image of the pale and weeping Isabelle came with with no softened feeling to his mind, and this marriage into which he had been urged by duty and obedience to his father, and to which of late he had scarcely given a thought, seemed to entammel him with a more galling and irremediable chain than ever.

“It is not very probable we shall meet in Paris, however,” thought he. “Brought up in a remote convent with mediocre talents and education, the atmosphere of the court will never suit Isabelle; it is most likely she will continue in the country, and at all events wherever she resides, we shall still be as indifferent as we are now, to each other, for it was very evident that her repugnance to our

unhappy union was quite equal to my own;—but after all, what signifies this marriage now.—I can never love again.”

With such reflections as these De Montfort tried to qualify the bitter potion he had been compelled to drink, and then he began immediately to lay out plans for his future life, determining to adhere to the pursuits which his uncle had chalked out for him.

The Ambassador was much chagrined at being about to lose the society of his nephew, in whom he had found talents and capabilities that had astonished him, and the development of which he very justly took the credit of to himself. He therefore encouraged him in his aspirations after political honors and as De Montfort had a natural and easy eloquence, he made no doubt but he would make a conspicuous figure in public life.

As the time approached for his departure, De Montfort felt still greater reluctance to bid adieu to those beautiful scenes where his spirits

had been so renovated and the powers of his mind so much awakened, and he spent as many hours every day as he could steal from his all-engrossing uncle, in visiting each favourite spot, and lingering wherever history or tradition had been busy with her records. He explored every ruin again and again to which ancient story or popular superstition had given a mysterious charm, and extended his excursions far into the surrounding country. The waters of the Bosphorus often sparkled brightly as his light boat flew over them, while the blue hills of Asia Minor looked enchanting in the distance, and on the near shore, as the caique proceeded, every stroke of the oar unfolded some new object—some fair pavilion, surrounded with its rose gardens and tall cypress trees, or a crumbling fortress perched upon some high cliff. In this manner the hours seemed to fly—but nothing in particular marked their progress.

It now wanted but a week of the time that

Baron had fixed upon for leaving Constantinople, when fate, as if determined that he should not depart from this region of romance without meeting with an adventure, led him, one evening after sunset, to the cemetery of Pera.

The shadows of twilight were just beginning to deepen as he entered the cemetery, light breezes played refreshingly amidst the tall cypress trees, and here and there, in this their favourite walk among the marble tombs and scented shrubs, groups of Turks and Armenians might be seen, arrayed in their splendid oriental costume—some chattering—some smoking—all enjoying the delicious coolness of the evening air. De Montfort soon sought the more retired part of the cemetery, and ascending a rising ground gazed upon the view of Constantinople spread out before him, with its kiosks and minarets, gardens, fountains, and groves of cypress trees in the fore-ground, while the Sea of Marmora, Scutari, and the lofty Mount

Olympus might be discerned in the distance. As he descended from this elevation, and turned into a retired alley, he perceived a female in the Armenian garb approaching through a cross walk evidently with the intention of accosting him.

When near enough, after first glancing hastily around in order to see that they were unobserved, she threw herself at his feet, and addressing him in tolerable Italian, said in the most piteous accents :

“ It is in your power, most noble Frank, to save the life of an unfortunate Greek maiden, who, should you refuse, and there be none other to help her—as I fear me there is not—must inevitably perish by a lingering and cruel death, as the Sultana, Zobeide, has vowed her destruction.”

De Montfort, much surprised at this strange rencontre, bade the petitioner arise, and he would listen to what she had to say to him. He perceived that the person addressing him was

an elderly woman, wrinkled and shrivelled, but with a prepossessing and benevolent expression of countenance, while the tears that rolled down her sallow cheeks left no doubt upon his mind of the truth of her statement. Sitting down upon one of the tombs, which was shaded by a thick laurel hedge, he motioned to her to place herself beside him. To this, however, his interlocutor would not consent, humbly seating herself on the grass at his feet.

“And now, good mother,” said the young Baron, whose curiosity was fully aroused, “tell me who this maiden is—in what manner she came to be placed in so perilous a situation—how it happens that you take so great an interest in her welfare, and what it is you wish me to do?”

“That is easily done,” replied the old woman, who after wiping her eyes, and again looking carefully around, began her narration in the following terms:

“I am an Armenian by birth, and some

seventeen years ago was in the service of Ypsilanti, a Greek residing at Constantinople—I had the care of his only child from her birth—a lovely, engaging little girl of whom I became passionately fond—When she was about six years old her father, who was a merchant, suffered a reverse of fortune by being security for a friend to a large amount, and to avoid being taken by the creditors was obliged to fly from Constantinople—I unfortunately could not accompany my nursling, having been suddenly taken with a violent access of fever—On my recovery I found they were gone, no one knew whither, and I lost sight of them entirely, and after various vicissitudes came at last to be enrolled amongst the attendant slaves of the Harem. A few days since a Greek maiden, who had been torn from her family and friends by some Turkish marauders, and sold to one of our Emirs, was, on account of her extreme beauty, sent by him as a present to the Sultan. The Sultan, who is just now absent at one of

his country houses, has not yet beheld her, and Zobiède, his favourite mistress, dreading the influence which this maiden, who is much younger and handsomer than herself, may obtain over the susceptible heart of the Sultan, has vowed to destroy her before he arrives.

It so happened that I, being well skilled in herbs and simples, was so fortunate as to be of use to Zobeide during a dangerous illness, when the prescriptions of her physician had failed to bring her any relief, and was therefore placed by her among her own particular attendants, and have ever since enjoyed a large share of her confidence. For this reason, on seeing this fair young creature, a few days since, filled with rage and jealousy, Zobeide persuaded the Kislar Aga that as I was clever as a leech, and very trustworthy, I was the fittest person to be placed about this young girl, who had given herself up to the deepest despair, and scarcely taken any nourishment since her captivity.

“ The eunuch, who feared his charge would die of grief before the return of the Sultan, willingly consented.

“ After making me a most unwilling confidant of her designs upon the unhappy maiden, Zobeide dismissed me to look after her, bidding me consider well what means had best be employed to get rid of her without exciting suspicion, suggesting herself poison, administered in small doses.

“ Struck with horror at the service required of me by Zobeide, I repaired to the apartment where the unfortunate victim was shut up. I found her sitting upon the floor, her face covered by her hands, and apparently in such despair that death itself would have been welcome to her.

“ On hearing the door open she raised her head and looked wildly at me—as I approached she started up—looked again, and exclaimed—

“ ‘ No, it is impossible—it cannot be—but—yes, it is, my dear, good, kind Glaphyra!’

“and throwing herself into my arms, she hid her face in my bosom, and wept bitterly.

“I was struck with amazement—I could hardly believe my senses—yet the tones of her voice seemed to awaken memories within me.

“‘Glaphyra,’ said she, ‘have you entirely forgotten your little Anastasia?’

“What do you say. Is her name Anastasir?” exclaimed the young Baron, interrupting her. “Where do her parents reside?”

“In Roumelia, my lord,” replied the old woman.

“Proceed with your story—I am much interested in it,” returned De Montfort, eagerly.

The old woman then continued—

“‘My poor child,’ exclaimed I, kissing her, ‘is it indeed you. Ah! what a fate is reserved for you. The favourite mistress of the Sultan, the proud Zobeide, has determined you shall die.’

“‘Dear nurse,’ said she, weeping, ‘death is better than to be for ever separated from my

betrothed lover, Ivan Michaelis. I will—ah ! how cheerfully—embrace death sooner than remain immured in this dreadful palace.’ ”

At the name of Ivan Michaelis, De Montfort started up with much agitation, but he resumed his seat immediately, and the old woman continued—

“ I said all I could to comfort the dear child—I told her I would die myself, rather than any evil should happen to her, and that it was to me Zobeide had given her in charge. I then persuaded her to take a little refreshment, for my poor Anastasia had eaten nothing for two days, and making her then lie down to rest, bade her trust in God, and soon saw her fall into a sweet sleep.

“ I then sought Zobeide, and dissembling my grief, informed her that I had already infused a small dose of poison into the nourishment I had persuaded the young maiden to swallow, and that she was now asleep from the effects of the potion, promising to repeat it on the

morning, and assuring her that, in three days, her victim should be no more.

“ Zobeide lauded my fidelity, and I returned to weep, and sit by the couch of Anastasia.

All that night I spent, in considering how I could save the life of my beloved foster child. Every plan seemed so difficult to execute, that I was almost driven to despair. I am only a poor slave, without any friends, and should I even contrive to get her out of the Palace, where am I to secrete her? How convey her out of Constantinople? In this dilemma, I have determined to apply to you, my Lord, as I happened to be in the bazaar yesterday, making some purchases for Zobeide, when you were choosing those rich stuffs from the merchant, and mentioned to him, that he must make despatch with your commissions, as you were on the point of leaving Constantinople.

“ It appeared to me, as if God had brought you to my assistance. I returned to the

bazaar to-day, and procured your address from the merchant.

“This afternoon I crossed over to Pera, and have watched beside your gateway. I saw you go forth, but you were not alone, and I dared not speak to you in the crowd; and I have anxiously followed your steps, ever since you came into the cemetery.”

Here the old woman paused, and De Montfort, filled with pity for the fair Anastasia, and doubly interested for her, on account of Ivan Michaelis, determined to run all risks and defy all danger, in endeavouring to liberate her, and restore her to her friends.

Glaphyra heard his resolution with tears of joy, already her beloved one seemed to her to be saved.

After a short consultation, it was arranged, that, on the following night, the old woman should leave unlocked, one of the small wickets opening towards the sea, through which, for ages, the unfortunate objects of the jealousy

of the Sultans, were wont to be hurried to their watery graves, and thus admit De Montford into the gardens of the harem. This she could contrive by means of a private key, which she knew Zobeide had in her possession, and which she thought she could, without much difficulty, secrete.

Glaphyra then described, accurately, to the young Baron, the path he was to follow, in order to reach the turret in the east angle of the harem, where the unfortunate Anastasia was confined, and which, fortunately for their scheme, was concealed from the view of the other apartments, by a projecting buttress.

Arrived beneath the window, which he would not fail to recognise, by a small lamp being placed in it, while a marble fountain, representing a winged dragon, threw up a column of water hard by, he was to clap his hands three times, when Glaphyra, by throwing down a silken ladder, which they must make fast beneath, would give him an opportunity of

reaching the casement, and assisting the maiden to descend.

This plan, though attended with imminent peril, perhaps death, should he be discovered in the gardens of the Seraglio, seemed to De Montfort to be feasible. He then inquired of the old woman, what method she would take to secure her own safety, and save herself from the vengeance of Zobeide, and from the punishment, which the Kislár Aga would no doubt inflict upon her, for so daring an offence, as that of assisting a female to escape from the harem.

To this, Glaphyra well versed in all kinds of stratagem, and having already pondered over it, replied that she would substitute a figure; stuffed with goat's hair, the face covered with a livid mask, which she had already procured, in the place of Anastasia, and enveloping it in her garments, would inform the Kislár Aga, who was prepared, by the excessive grief of the maiden, for such a consummation, that she

had died raging mad of an infectious fever. The Kishlar Aga, having no grounds for suspicion, and always dreading, above all things, a contagious disorder in the harem, would have the supposed body immediately nailed up in a coffin, and interred.

“Zobeide, she could easily make believe, that the poison administered by her orders had taken effect, and in this manner be enabled to deceive both her mistress and the black eunuch.

How her beloved Anastasia was to be conveyed in safety from Constantinople Glaphyra said, she must leave entirely to the care of her preserver, but she depended upon the honour of the noble Frank, that he would restore her to her parents.

De Montfort reiterated his promises of assistance and protection for the young girl, assuring Glaphyra that should he find the wicket open leading into the seraglio gardens, he would not fail to be beneath her window on the following midnight.

Twilight was by this time fast fading away, and the stars came out brightly in the dark blue heavens. The old woman saw she had better hasten home lest Zobeide might make inquiries for her, therefore bidding De Montfort adieu, with many thanks and blessings, she hurried to the quay to seek the caique in which she had crossed over from the seraglio point, while De Montfort, turning his steps towards the French quarter in Pera, meditated upon the dangerous and romantic enterprise in which he found himself so suddenly engaged.

CHAPTER IX.

It is old and plain.
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun
And the free maids that weave their thread with
bones
Do use to chant it ; it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love
Like the old age.

Shakspeare.

ALTHOUGH Delamare had cruelly allowed his eyes to speak volumes on the morning of his departure, and had even talked of their meeting again ere long, as he was going to spend some weeks at his guardian's house, Isabelle

perceived that Eulalie was not in her usual spirits that day—she frequently started as if from a reverie, when spoken to, and then answered as if she had not heard a word that was said. Isabelle therefore thought a walk would enliven her, and as the day was very beautiful, proposed they should take a short cut through the fields and lanes to the Chateau de Beaumont, which was not more than two leagues distant.

To this proposal Eulalie joyfully consented ; and after passing through several narrow, shady lanes, scrambling over stiles and crossing a little streamlet on stepping stones, they perceived at the extremity of an orchard, before the door of a farm house, the old blind man with his two grandchildren, whom they had seen at the fair the preceding evening, seated upon a stone bench, and playing the *cornemuse*, while a merry troop of peasants danced around him.

Isabelle approached, and after speaking

kindly to the blind man, bade him come and rest at the Chateau that night.

It was evening when the old man entered the court yard of the Chateau de Beaumont, and the steward, who had been previously directed by his mistress, after giving him some refreshment in the hall, led the little party to the terrace into which the windows of the salon opened, where Isabelle and Eulalie generally spent their evenings.

They were now there, with some friends who had walked over unexpectedly to pass an hour or two with them. Isabelle motioned to the steward to lead the old man to a rustic seat just opposite the windows, over which a large chestnut tree formed an umbrageous covering from the heats of the summer day, and the dews of evening. Seated on the bench, the old man played some national airs on the *cornemuse* while the children sat at his feet, and the little dog Mador stretched himself out to sleep on the green sod.

At length, when the old man paused, the young baroness, wishing to vary the entertainment, asked him to recite one of those old Breton ballads—so simple yet so touching. The blind man immediately complied with her request, and in a plaintive but rather monotonous tone repeated the following stanzas:

* THE HEIRESS OF KEROULAS.

“The lovely heiress of Keroulas
Must gay and gladsome be.
To dance in her robe of blue satin
With lords of high degree.”

Thus said the ancient servitors
Who waited in the hall,
When the Marquis de Mesle and his lady mother
Appeared to grace the ball.

* Translated from an ancient Breton Ballad given in “Les Derniers Bretons” by E. Souvestre.

“ O would I were a blue pigeon !”
Said the heiress with a sigh,
“ Like those that perch upon the towers,
Of Keroulas so high ;

To hear what plot against my peace,
His mother lays with mine,
Alas ! I tremble whilst I look,
To think what they design.

They come not here from † Cornouaille,
Without some secret spring,
They come not where an heiress dwells
For naught but revelling.

The Marquis may have titles grand,
He may have gold in store—
But I have loved Kerthomas long,
And will love him ever more.”

With anxious eye Kerthomas looked,
On those who came that day,
For dearly he loved that fair ladye,
And sighing, thus would say :

* The estate of the Marquis de Mesle.

“ O if I were the little * *sarcelle*
That yonder streamlet bears,
Whose crystal waters lave the robe,
My lovely mistress wears,

How would I sport upon that brook
And with what deep delight,
Mine eyes and plumage would I plunge
Within its waters bright !

For the † *becassine* who mid the ice
Of the marshes makes her nest,
Has less of coolness there—than I
Have love within my breast.”

“ O madam—my lady mother dear—
Give not my hand away
To Lord de Mesle—but to Pennaurun,
Or to Lord Salaûn I pray.

“ But rather give me to Kerthomas,
The gentlest knight is he ;
And you frowned not on his suit, my mother,
When he spake of love to me.

* Teal.

† Snipe.

“ O I have been at Châteaugal,*
Dim looked its courts so wide,
The moaning wind through smoky halls
And shattered windows sighed.

“ And I have been at Kerthomas—
O would that it were mine !
As silver are the portals bright—
Like gold the windows shine.”

“ My child, your happiness I seek—
Those foolish fancies hide ;
My word is pledged, and you must be
The Lord de Mesle's bride.”

“ With smiles of joy did I receive
The ring Kerthomas wore :
And now alas ! with bitter tears,
This ring I must restore.

“ Take back thy ring of gold, Kerthomas—
Thy signet with its chain ;
These gifts—since I must wed another—
I dare not now retain.”

* The chateau of the Marquis de Mesle.

The hardest heart at Keronlas
 Could not but grieve that day,
When they saw the weeping heiress kiss
The gates ere she went away.

“ Adieu, great house of Keroulas,
 Me never more you'll view ;
Adieu, ye faithful servitors—
 A long—a last adieu !”

But when she saw the parish poor
 How fast their tears did fall—
“ O weep not thus, my pensioners,
 But come to Chateaugal.

“ And I will give you alms each day,
 And three times in the week,
Eighteen quarters of wheat with oats,
 And barley you may seek.”

Then bespoke him the Lord de Mesle,
 And to his bride did say—
“ Madam, my wealth will not suffice
 To give such alms away.

“ Marquis de Mesle,” she replied,
 “ Your goods I will not take,

But of my own I'll give to win
Their prayers for my soul's sake."

And when she came to Chateaugal—

"O tell me is there one
With a message to Keroulas,
For me will ride or run?"

A youthful page replied to this—

"Madam if you will write
I'll find a messenger with speed
To take your scroll to-night."

She wrote a letter hastily :

And to the page did say—
"Give it unto my lady mother,
Without a stop or stay."

"O saddle me my grey palfrey,"

Her lady mother cried,

"For I must haste to Chateaugal
To see what doth betide."

"O how are they at Châteaugal ?

Why do ye sad appear ?

And why are all the portals hung

With trappings dark and drear ?"

“ The youthful heiress died last night
The bride so lately wed !”
“ O luckless day !—O woe is me !”
The sorrowing lady said.

“ O woe is me !...for if my child
Has yielded up her breath,
Alas ! 'tis I...who am her mother
'Tis I have caused her death.”

“ O give me not to Lord de Mesle,”
She often said with sighs,
“ But give me rather to Kerthomas,
Who is dearer to mine eyes—”

The woful lady of Keroulas
To a nunnery is gone,
And Kerthomas in a cloister
Gives his vows to God alone.

When the old man had finished his recitation all the company applauded his performance, and Mador, as if conscious that his beloved master had met with approval, sprang upon his breast and licked his face. The Baroness gave

him a cup of wine with her own fair hand, and then, ordering the steward to see that the little party were well lodged and cared for, dismissed them, first telling the old minstrel that he and his grand children should spend a few days at the Château. This invitation the old man received with much gratitude, saying, however, that he could not remain beyond the third day as he should then take the road to Caen, where there was to be a great fair held. This little *rencontre* served much to enliven the spirits of Eulalie, who made the old man play the *cornemuse* and recite ballads for her, or else listened to Angelique's plaintive ditties, the greater part of the two following days, whilst in the evenings, the Abbé de Saye, who resided in the neighbourhood, and was a frequent visitor at the Chateau, a venerable man about seventy years of age, gave them learned dissertations upon the ancient ballad poetry of Brittany and Normandy, and the songs of the *Trouveres*, accompanied by a minute account of the origin

and progress of *La Cour d'Amour*, once so celebrated in Provence, with all of which subjects he was quite as well acquainted as he was with his breviary, having in early life been both a poet and a warrior himself.

The old minstrel on leaving the Château bestowed many a blessing upon its gentle inmates, and Eulalie felt a lively regret in parting with the pretty Angelique, who on her part shed many tears. Jean and Mador, however, seemed to resume their erratic life with much alacrity, and a long time passed away before the inhabitants of the Château heard tidings of the old man and his grandchildren.

CHAPTER X.

Ladye, throw back thy raven hair,
Lay thy white brow in the moonlight bare,
I will look on the stars, and look on thee,
And read the page of thy destiny.

L. E. L.

I talk of dreams ;
Which are the children of an idle brain
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE observations which Madame d'Anglures could not help making upon the pointed attentions of Henri Desguy to Eulalie forced her,

though not without some reluctance to think upon the probability of this dear child's being soon settled in life. She would much rather have kept her with herself for two or three years longer, but the match would be an advantageous one in every point of view—the young man being amiable, his family wealthy and respectable; and that the Provost had no intention of crossing his son's wishes, his manner towards the whole family sufficiently testified, although she knew he must be aware that Eulalie's dowry would be but very small.

All these considerations made her imagine that she could not better secure the future happiness of Eulalie than by forwarding a union so well assorted in every respect. Nevertheless she was in no hurry to bring it to a conclusion, and thought that it might be as well for the young people to see a little more of each other before matters proceeded further.

That Eulalie could have the slightest objection to this marriage never once entered into

her calculations and having arranged the affair completely to her own satisfaction, she now turned her thoughts for the first time, to what might be Josephine's future destiny.

Fondly attached to her daughters and always living with them in the greatest harmony, Madame d'Anglures had, until now, shut her eyes to the probability of their being soon taken from beneath her maternal wing; and she would still have gladly remained in the same pleasing forgetfulness as to what might be their future prospects, had not the frequent visits of Henri Desguey called her serious attention to the subject.

"It is not likely that Josephine will ever marry well," soliloquised Madame d'Anglures "for she is not in the least pretty although so good and gentle, and her portion like that of Eulalie will be very small—my jointure, though handsome, and sufficient to keep up a respectable appearance in the world, expires with me, and after my death the poor child will have to

submit to many privations should she remain single—I cannot part with her just yet, but in all things she seems so perfectly suited for a conventual life that a kind providence must have inspired me with the idea—yes—Josephine must be a nun—I will gradually try to assist in bringing about her vocation, and will speak to our good Abbé upon the subject—I have no doubt but he will entirely coincide in my opinion. It will be hard for me to part with so sweet a companion as Josephine; but alas! the time must arrive when I shall be called upon to bid a final adieu to this world and to both my dear children and it is best for me to see them settled before I die.”

Thus reasoned the good but not very clear sighted Madame d’Anglures, and she accordingly took the very first opportunity, of speaking to her confessor and friend, the Abbé de Saye, upon the subject.

The old man heard her very attentively; he

chimed in with all her views for Eulalie, but her plan for Josephine, he did not seem to embrace so eagerly as she expected. He had not always been a priest himself, and though a very good man, had not quite outlived the memory of his young days.

“Mademoiselle Josephine is too young,” said he, taking a pinch of snuff. “It is quite time enough to think about a convent for her by and by—let the poor child look after her bees and flowers, and ramble in the woods a little longer.”

The Baroness was not well pleased, that the old Abbé did not enter into her scheme for Josephine, with greater warmth. The more thought she gave to it herself, the more admirably suited for this dear daughter did she consider it to be.

“And after all, I might then see her a Lady Abbess before I die, and no one can be better suited for such dignity, than my dear, good Josephine.”

Thus did this tender mother muse, and from want of a little penetration, chalk out paths in life for two beloved daughters, diametrically opposite to their inclinations; and thus it frequently is in this world, that we are blind to the various feelings, hopes, and disappointments, of those who are dearest to us, and with whom we the most constantly associate.

The good Abbé de Saye, who had been for years a constant visitant at the Chateau, had a much keener insight into the feelings and character of his favourite Josephine, than had her mother; and when the Baroness urged him to mark out for Josephine, a course of study and devotional attendance, most fit to prepare her for her future vocation, the worthy man, without assigning his motives, decidedly said, that he had every reason to be satisfied with Mademoiselle Josephine at present, and begged that her mother would, on no account, mention

anything about a vocation to her, for a year at least.

The Baroness, satisfied with his approbation of Josephine, promised compliance with his wishes; nevertheless, she could not help furtively throwing in her child's way, any books that she thought might conduce to seriousness of mind, and without directly prohibiting their perusal, putting aside all the effusions of the old *Trouvères* and romance writers, that she could lay her hands upon. Nevertheless, to her great mortification, the good Abbé himself, was sometimes the means of bringing one or other of those hidden volumes to light. Accustomed to spend three or four evenings in the week at the Chateau, and delighting in music, particularly in the old national ballads, he frequently demanded a song of some old *Trouvère* from Josephine, instead of the sacred chants the Baroness placed before her, and which he said with truth, her voice could not do justice to.

This was the more provoking to the Baroness, as Josephine looked up to him, and revered him as a father, and one word from the Abbé de Saye, in token of disapprobation, would have made her burn her ballads immediately. However, the good Baroness had nothing to do, but to submit good humouredly to her old friend and confessor.

“ If Josephine should, of her own accord, wish to enter a convent hereafter, I shall not oppose the dear child’s wish; on the contrary, I will, by instruction and precept, do all in my power, to prepare her for so solemn a change—but look at Josephine now, and say, do you think it probable, that she is yet tired of the world ?”

So said the old Abbè one evening to Madame d’Anglures, when having put his hat and stick in the corner as usual, he called her attention from her knitting to the group of young people who were dancing on the green plot outside the window of the salon. At that moment

Josephine seemed to have changed characters with her sister, so bright was her colour, and so sparkling her eye.

She was dancing with Henri Desguey, while Eulalie, who had hoped Delamare would have joined their little party, and had refused to dance with Henri, under pretext of having a headache, sat by, looking very grave.

Isabelle, seated at the harp close to the other window of the salon, which was open, played with a light and brilliant finger the airs to which the young people were so merrily dancing.

Henri Desguey in his pursuit of the beautiful little Eulalie, had likewise tried to ingratiate himself into the good graces and friendship of Josephine, whom he considered as a most amiable and sensible girl, and likely to influence her volatile little sister. If Eulalie neglected to wear the flowers with which he presented her, or disdainfully threw them aside, as she often did, he always turned to Josephine

for consolation, and to enjoy at least the pleasure of talking of his beloved. Did Eulalie fly off from him in their walks, or manœuvre to be engaged when he asked her to dance, the gentler Josephine was always near, to listen sympathisingly to his complaints, which, however, did not last long, as he was of a gay, lively temperament, or to join him with an untiring step in the mazes of the dance. Thus, though passionately attached to one sister, he more frequently conversed and danced with the other; and in this manner Josephine, without indulging an idea of attracting him, or supposing she could be attracted by him, was thrown into, and took, without being aware of it, a dangerous pleasure in his society, and while she considered herself his friend and confidant, was on the brink of feeling for him a much warmer sentiment.

His visits were now of daily occurrence at the chateau d'Anglures, and although, latterly, Isabelle spent the greater part of her time

there with Eulalie, if it so happened that the latter was at the Chateau de Beaumont, Desguy always persuaded Josephine to lay aside her embroidery frame or her book, and accompany him thither, the short way across the fields; and sometimes he brought his sisters to join in their walk.

They were very fond of Josephine, and much preferred her to her sister. The soft, easy temper of the former pleased them, and she had no beauty to compete with theirs, while besides being chafed at the admiration which Eulalie generally excited, they were displeased at the coldness she evinced towards their brother, of whom they were both fond and proud.

Isabelle always received them with pleasure, and was ready to discard her books and painting, and join them in their rambles towards the sea coast, which was generally their favourite point of attraction. Frequently she made them spend the rest of the day, until the cool

of the evening, at her chateau, and in the intermediate time would send to some of her near neighbours, and assembling all the young people would play on the harp for them, while they danced merrily until the stars told them it was time to return home.

Eulalie's gay vivacity constantly made her forget her dread of young Desguey's attentions, and a bright smile and kind word were always kindling his hopes anew ; while unacquainted with her sister's mind, in respect to Delamare, Josephine thought it impossible but that she must at last like Henri Desguey, imputing her present reserve towards him, to the indifference of an unoccupied heart, or to a playful caprice, never once imagining that Delamare, whom she considered grown both proud and sullen, could be preferred, by her gay little sister, to the entertaining and always good tempered Henri Desguey.

Thus did the days of the young Baroness de Montfort fly rapidly and agreeably away, al-

ways occupied in useful pursuits, or in giving pleasure to others, she was the idol of the little circle among whom she dwelt, entering into their amusements, sympathising in their troubles, and promoting their happiness in every way she could. Her own former life seemed but a dream, while her present existence was a delightful reality, and so much did she enjoy the pleasures of friendship, her independent state, and the companionship of the young and lively, that *love*, though playing pranks with so many hearts around her, found not the smallest aperture to creep into hers—not even the remembrance of the time when he had hovered around her at Venice, ever came to disturb her repose, and her marriage had become so dream-like an occurrence to her imagination, that a thought of it scarcely ever crossed her mind.

Such was the state of things, when one day it was arranged that they should have a *pic-nique* up the river Seine.

The boat contained Madame d'Anglures, Isabelle, Josephine, and Eulalie—the Provost with his two daughters, Leonore and Adele. while the Abbé de Saye, Delamare, and Henri Desguey, with the boatmen, constituted the rest of the party. It was a delicious afternoon when they set out, and after rowing up the river for a couple of hours, they looked about for a suitable spot on one of the banks for their cold collation.

A grassy plot shaded with large trees, and partly surrounded by high rocks, seemed purposely intended by nature, from its shade and retirement, and the arched canopy, which the interlacing boughs formed over it, for a sylvan banquetting hall. Here they disembarked, and scattering about in various groups while the repast was laying out on a grassy knoll, they peered into every leafy nook and thicket, watching the agile squirrel springing from bough to bough and startling the timid hare from his form.

Presently they discovered, on the edge of a green slope at a little distance, a group of gipseys seated under a large chesnut tree. A young girl, dark as night, came forward to greet them, and addressing them in broken French with a strong foreign pronunciation, offered to tell their fortunes.

Fearful that the old Abbé, who was vehemently opposed to all fortune-tellers and astrologers, horoscopes, magical secrets, and hazel-tree wands, so much relied upon at this period, by even the most learned men, might approach, they at first hesitated, but seeing that he did not make his appearance, Adele, who had been conversing with Delamare in a lively strain, presented her palm to the fortune-teller. What she told her nobody knew, but the young girl looked well satisfied with the promised fortune.

Her sister followed her example, as did Henri, but the latter did not appear as pleased,

as were his sisters, with his future destiny.

The rest of the party declined her eager importunities, and were turning away, when an elder and more dignified female approached.

She had been minutely examining the young people from beneath the chesnut tree, and after curiously scanning them all, came forward, bringing in her hand some small bunches of flowers, one of which she presented to each individual, informing them that they were symbolical. Her French was better than that of her companion, the younger gypsey, though likewise marked with a foreign accent. Being offered money in return for her presents, she coldly repulsed it, saying that so insignificant an offering did not require any recompense, and the party, amused with their rencontre, now retraced their steps back, and proceeded to examine the nosegays, not, however, without a little anxiety mingled with

their curiosity, as to what might be the meaning attached to the flowers.

“Rosemary!” exclaimed Isabelle, looking with much surprise at the large bunch of rosemary she had got, and then she paused to consider.

“It is for remembrance,” thought she, and a deep blush crossed her cheek, while the Church of the *Salute*, and all the memories attached to it—so long buried, and to all appearance, extinguished in her bosom, rose vividly, like a panoramic picture before her eyes, as if conjured up by the wand of an enchanter.

“And violets mingled with it,” exclaimed she again, as she picked up the small bunch of violets, which, unperceived until now, had dropped from the midst of the rosemary. “Remembrance and constancy—how strange!—but it must be purely accidental.”

“What have you got, Josephine?”

And Josphine smiling, held out the bunch of *gilliflowers*, which the gipsey had placed in her hand.

“ Ah, yes—yours is very appropriate,” continued Isabelle—“ *gilliflower* is for gentleness—but there is *lavender* in it too—*lavender* signifies true love—what have you to do yet, with true love, Josephine?—take care of your little heart.”

But Josephine only smiled complacently, for she thought that her heart was safe in her own keeping.

Eulalie hid the large bunch of *violets* she had received, with a secret consciousness of their truth, in her bosom, not perceiving the sprigs of *rue* that were interwoven with them; while Delamare disdainfully threw away the *fennel*, which the gipsey had bestowed upon him, not liking the allusion to insincerity, which it conveyed.

Afraid of being reprehended by the good Abbé, for daring to listen to any one, who pro-

fessed a knowledge of the occult sciences, they were silent on the subject of their meeting with the gipseys.

It was moonlight. when they re-entered the boat. Eulalie was all sparkling vivacity, as, seated near the thoughtful Delamare, she sang duets with Josephine, to which no one listened with more pleasure, than did the good Abbé, while the young Baroness, unable to give much attention to the music, was glad that it gave a suitable pretext for silence.

The little incident of the flowers, so trifling in itself, opened the floodgates of memory in the soul of Isabelle. It was in vain she tried to persuade herself, that if those symbolical flowers had any occult meaning, they must refer to her subsequent to her marriage, and endeavouring to banish all former recollections from her mind, she recurred, with a feverish anxiety, to every minute circumstance attending it.

No sooner did sleep close her eyes, than visions, vague and fitful, haunted her pillow.

Again in her dreams she beheld the gipsy apparently invested with a supernatural power ; she felt her dark eyes looking into the depths of her heart, and evermore her portentous voice whispered in her ear—‘ Memory and undying love will yet take possession of thy heart. Yes, when least expected, thou shalt see him again.’

“ It is impossible—it is impossible we shall ever see each other again,” said Isabelle starting up from a troubled slumber, “ and if we did meet, I should not be able to recognise him—besides, I cannot—dare not, love him now, for am I not the wife of another? It is witchcraft—a bunch of rosemary and a few violets never could have conjured up such reminiscences and mysterious shadows of the future. I will destroy the unhallowed gift.”

So saying, she hastily rose, and taking the flowers, which lay on a marble console, proceeded to the dressing-room, where she knew, had been left a chafing dish of coals.

The grey dawn was beginning to spread over the heavens, and throwing an indistinct light into the apartment, half revealed, and half hid the objects it contained, when Isabelle, passing by a mirror, started with an indescribable feeling of terror, for an accidental glance towards its shadowy surface, revealed to her the dark aisles of a church. It was but a momentary glimpse. Hurrying on without daring to look again, and throwing the bunch of flowers which she now perceived were curiously interlaced with a mystic silver thread, upon the chafing dish, she watched, with a beating heart the crisping leaves curl up and slowly consume.

The breath of morning, blowing refreshingly through an open lattice, cooled her fevered temples, and retreating to her sleeping room she again passed the mirror, before which she now paused ; but her own image, pale and weary looking, as if she had spent a night of vigils, was alone reflected therein.

For some time after this incident, Isabelle was unable, as before, entirely to stifle all recollection of past scenes, which successfully as she might banish them in her waking hours, came, unbidden, and unwelcome, to mingle in her dreams, with all those wild extravagancies and impossibilities with which sleep ever invests her phantasmagoria. Again he, to whose passionate vows she had listened in the church of the *Salute*, knelt before her, but she saw not his face—either a mask, or the dim twilight, or his plumed cap, concealed it from her view. Nina was not there—the gipsy alone watched beside them.

Once only she dreamed that she saw the face of her lover. They were on a wild, solitary heath—it was night; the storm raged, and the lightning flashed. He held her hand fast in his, and bade her fear nothing. She turned to look at him, and a flash of lightning revealed the features of De Montfort, and with a shriek of surprise she awoke.

Again she slept, and the clash of arms was heard. She thought she threw herself between two knights engaged in deadly combat, and tried to separate them—but her efforts were in vain. A sword, and it was that of De Montfort, pierced the heart of the other knight, who wore the well remembered Spanish dress and mask in which she had seen him at her first masquerade.

CHAPTER XI.

Wondrous it is to see in diverse mindes.
How diversely Love doth his pageants play.

Spenser.

Elle étoit logée dans un magnifique appartement du Palais, qui n'avoit au lieu de tapisseries que de grandes glaces de miroir de toute la hauteur des chambres et des cabinets.

FENELON.

NOTWITHSTANDING the secret decision of Pierre Delamare with respect to the church, he still continued to see Eulalie occasionally, and to bestow on her, when he deemed himself unobserved, those thousand little nameless tokens

of love and devotion which give security to the too confiding female heart.

Delamare could not endure the idea of Eulalie belonging to another—the possibility of her ever giving her hand to Henri Desguey was insupportable. Yet at the same time that he found he could never reconcile his love and ambition together, being conscious that the latter passion was so interwoven with his existence as to have become the master spring of all his actions, and the all-powerful ruler of his soul, he determined that, as Eulalie never could be his, she should never, if it was in his power to prevent it, marry any one else, and by thus confirming and strengthening the influence, he knew he had over her, he hoped, when he bade adieu to the world, so to mystify her poor heart and blind her judgment, that, while acknowledging to herself that he was bound to her by no promise or avowal of love, she might, in the hopelessness of disappointed affection, immure herself in a convent.

Such were the secret springs that moved the unworthy Delamare, although perhaps not so clearly developed to himself as we have shown them to our reader. The innocent Eulalie always hailed his approach with undisguised pleasure, while Isabelle watched him with an anxious eye, and a distrusting mind.

The young Baroness had now passed more than a year at her Chateau in Normandy, when just at this period her father-in-law, the Count de Beaumont, procured for her the appointment of lady in waiting to the Queen. He had been much chagrined at the behaviour of his son, and hoped by bringing Isabelle into the sunshine of royal favour, and habituating her to the air and manners of a court, that she might, on De Montfort's return, make a different impression on him to that which she had formerly done. Isabelle would have immediately declined this honour, had she not been wrought upon by arguments and entreaties of Madame d'Anglures, who, although it would deprive

her of the society of one whom she looked upon as a beloved daughter, saw of what infinite advantage the countenance of the Queen would be to Isabelle, in the position in which De Montfort's cruel neglect had placed her.

Isabelle would willingly have taken Eulalie to Paris, but, to her great mortification, the young girl declined her invitation, beseeching her with tears in her eyes, not to mention the subject to her mother lest she might urge her acceptance of it.

Isabelle conjectured that the prolonged residence of Pierre Delamare in the neighbourhood, together with the continuance of his disingenuous conduct, was the cause of this refusal.

Sometimes Isabelle fancied that Delamare had given up all idea of her little friend, from the long intervals between his visits, and the consequent dejection of Eulalie; but when he *did* come he always managed, without, apparently, paying Eulalie any particular attention,

to re-animate her spirits, and call back her former gaiety.

Isabelle too, suspected that Eulalie considered the undiguised dislike which Delamare evinced for Henri Desgney as an undeniable proof of the passion he entertained for her himself.

Desgney, whose admiration for Eulalie could not be misunderstood, was evidently anxious to win the good opinion of Madame d'Anglures and public report whispered, that the provost had already made her acquainted with the wishes of his son, but as yet, however, she had not spoken to Eulalie on the subject.

Isabelle signified to her father-in-law her acceptance of the place of lady in waiting to the Queen, and it was arranged that she should leave Normandy for Paris in a few weeks.

The intermediate time was spent principally at the Chateau d'Anglures, and there Isabelle had an opportunity of remarking the different

sentiments which occupied the minds of the young people.

Desguey was constantly at the Chateau, and his suit was evidently favoured by Madame d'Anglures. He had not however yet openly declared himself to Eulalie, who, notwithstanding, could hardly be ignorant of the purport of his visits, and she, who would have liked his frank, agreeable manners, had Josephine been the object of his preference instead of herself, felt constrained and uncomfortable in his society, particularly if Pierre Delamare happened to be present, while the gentle Josephine, silent and pre-occupied, scarcely ever spoke or raised her eyes from her embroidery frame, it being evident that she too was ill at ease.

About a week before her departure from Normandy, Isabelle, accompanied by Eulalie, took the short way through the lanes and orchards from the Chateau de Beaumont, where they had been for a few days, to the Chateau d'Anglures.

They had almost arrived at the little stream with stepping stones across it, when they were joined by Henri Desguey, who had been taking a ramble in that direction. A few paces more brought them to the stream, where they found a little girl about six years of age, sitting on the bank, and crying bitterly.

On being questioned, she said that she was going with her brother to see her grandmother who lived in a cottage, on the opposite side of the hill, but that her brother, seeing she was unable to step across the stones, refused to carry her over, and had bade her stay there until his return.

Young Desguey, than whom no one could have had a better or kinder disposition, directly took the child in his arms and carried her across, and then leading her to a stile at a short distance, which he likewise assisted her to surmount, did not leave her until he had seen her take the right path up the hill towards her grandmother's cottage.

This little act of kindness in young Desguey was rewarded by the pretty Eulalie with a thousand smiles, and forgetful for the time that he wished for any other interest in her heart than that of friendship and neighbourly intimacy, she laughed and chatted with him, enjoying his witty conversation and lively remarks, for he had a fund of humour and harmless sarcasm in his composition.

He had always been a favourite with the young Baroness, and Isabelle, rejoiced to see her dear little friend once more like her former self, gladly joined in their merriment. They had nearly arrived at the Chateau d'Anglures in this lively mood, when Pierre Delamare approached. The sight of Eulalie in the company of Henri Desguey and in high spirits, was a dagger to his jealous, selfish heart, and after the first salutations were over, and they had entered the salon, poor Eulalie saw, by the moody air, which he vainly tried to conceal, that he was offended at something or other.

They found Josephine in a distant window of the salon, with her embroidery frame before her, intently reading the romance of *La Princess de Cleves*, which in some confusion she slipped under her pattern, while the Abbé de Saye entertained Madame d'Anglures, who in another part of the apartment was busily employed in knitting. Josephine received them with great pleasure, and told them, that in the evening an addition was to be made to their party, and that they were to have a dance; and in the meantime Isabelle, seeing a sort of constraint spreading over them all, in consequence of Eulalie's sudden reserve, and Delamare's silence, proposed music.

Young Desguey eagerly asked Eulalie to allow him to join her in a duet; but she complained of some sensation in her throat occasioned by a cold, and could not sing—the truth was, that if she had made the attempt, she knew she would inevitably have burst into tears. Isabelle then bade him apply to Jose-

phine, who immediately complied with his request, and as Desgney led her to the harp and offered to sing with her, so bright a joy beamed in her countenance, that Isabelle for the first time, thought she looked nearly as pretty as Eulalie.

Notwithstanding the songs and music, the old Abbé seized on Isabelle, and tried to engage her attention, by some learned disquisitions upon the ancient music of Normandy, but Isabelle's thoughts were too distracted to permit her to hear one word he said. She had, from the spot where she was seated, a view of a small conservatory communicating with the salon by glass doors, and perceiving that Delamare had followed Eulalie thither, caught a glimpse of him when in the act of taking a flower from her bouquet, pressing it to his lips and placing it in his bosom. Soon the rest of their friends arrived, and dancing commenced—Eulalie, although rather more grave than was her wont, danced all the evening; and peace

seemed to have smiled again upon the inmates of the Château.

Isabelle left Normandy with a heavy heart on account of her young favourite, for whom she saw nothing but a perspective of disappointment and blighted love. The more she had studied the character of Delamare, the less was she able to understand him; she could only come to the conclusion, that with all the talents and knowledge, which he certainly possessed, he was unamiable, selfish, and insincere—neither in the present state of affairs could she wish, the more amiable, though not so highly gifted Desguey, to supplant him in the affections of Eulalie, could such an event be possible, as she more than suspected that the gentle Josephine was warmly prepossessed in favour of the Provost's son.

Madame d'Anglures, Josephine, and Eulalie, shed many tears at parting, and embraced the young Baroness tenderly, expressing a hope that she would frequently write to them, and

as they stood at the window, watching the carriage winding its way through the valley, until they lost sight of it in the distance, Madame d'Anglures thought within herself:—

“ It is impossible that De Montfort, on his return from abroad, should not be struck with the dazzling charms of Isabelle, heightened as they are, by the fascinations of her ingenuous and noble manner; nevertheless, should he still neglect his beautiful wife, her mind is too high-toned and pure, for me to fear that she will ever forget what is due to herself, even amidst all the allurements and attractions of a Court.”

The time that Isabelle had spent in Normandy since her marriage, had given strength to her mind and decision to her character. The strange position in which she stood, had matured and developed her fine intellect; she had no stronger mind to look up to for guidance, or rely on for support; she had been obliged to think and act for herself; and as

De Montfort had placed the entire revenue of the estate in Normandy, which his father had settled on him at his marriage, at her disposal, with absolute power over the domestics and tenantry, she had had much to regulate and arrange, many abuses to rectify, which had crept in unperceived, owing to the absence of the proprietor; cottages to erect, or put in repair, for the poor tenantry; and instruction to provide for the children. Thus, when she left the Château de Beaumont, it was amidst the tears and blessings of a happy and grateful peasantry.

On her arrival in Paris, she was received by the Count de Beaumont, and immediately installed in her office, of one of *les dames du Palais* to the Queen, and put in possession of a handsome suite of apartments.

Isabelle now found herself, at once in the midst of all that was gay, witty, and voluptuous. Looked upon with a gracious eye by the King and Queen, admired by the men,

and envied by the women, yet was she not now, as before, dazzled and bewildered by the change, but rather beheld it all with an easy indifference, and was totally unconscious of the feelings she excited. This ignorance, and the graceful self-possession of her manners, was, in a measure, the result of her freedom from vanity, and her pure spirit seemed to glide through the intricate mazes of a Court, as the moon, in all her chastened splendour, moves through the dark clouds of night. The fêtes and amusements at Court were still as numerous and dazzling as ever, although Louis himself had given up dancing in the ballets.

It was some lines in the tragedy of *Britannicus*, acted before him at St. Germain, which, making a deep impression on the monarch, prevented his dancing thus in public for the future.

They run thus:—

“ Pour toute ambition, pour vertu singulière,
Il excelle a conduire un char dans la carrière,
A disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
A se donner lui meme en spectacle aux Romains.”

Of a majestic height, with noble features, and the air of an absolute monarch, Louis was designed by nature to succeed in everything he undertook ; yet, while he was a perfect master of, and excelled in every feat of arms that took place at the tilts and tournaments of those days, exhibiting in the public dance, was certainly a degradation to so great a King.

Soon after the arrival of Isabelle at Paris the king prepared. with the principal officers and ladies of his court, to make a tour and visit all the conquered cities in Flanders. Isabelle, with the other dames du palais, accompanied the Queen in splendid equipages. The Dauphin followed them with his retinue, as did Mademoiselle with her suite. Masqued balls

and fire works awaited them in every town, and they travelled from place to place, surrounded by as much splendour as if they had been still in the palace at Versailles, for they brought with them the most magnificent jewels and furniture of the crown.

The ladies of the highest rank in Brussels and Ghent were eager to behold all this pomp and grandeur, and the King everywhere feted them with much gallantry, making them the most costly presents.

The gentle and amiable Marie Therese, although no longer beloved by Louis, was always treated by him with marked attention, and shared in all the honours paid to him, while the fair dames in her train formed the brightest ornaments at every festivity.

The Court of Louis the Fourteenth was at this time the most brilliant spectacle in Europe. There, all that can be imagined of splendour, beauty, and talent were united together, and although Isabelle had left the country with

regret, she did not therefore despise the pleasures and amusements which an abode at Paris offered to her.

An amateur in painting, and a passionate lover of music, alive to all the fascinations of the theatre, then adorned with the comic genius of Moliere and the lofty inspirations of Corneille and Racine, the young Baroness, on her return from Flanders, fully participated in the enjoyment of those gratifications which genius and taste spread before her, and having been introduced, by the Count de Beaumont, to Madame de Sevigné, with whom he was distantly connected, soon found herself surrounded by all the wits and learned men of the day.

CHAPTER XII.

After long storms and tempests overblown
The sun at length his joyous face doth clear :
So when as fortune all her spite hath shown,
Some blissful hours at last must needs appear.
Else should afflicted wights oft times despair.

SPENSER.

ON arriving at his apartments in the ambassador's palace, De Montfort found that his uncle had sent several times in search of him, as having some sudden business to transact

himself he wanted his nephew to do the honours to a large party of convives, who were that evening assembled at his house.

Fain would De Montfort have excused himself, but that was impossible. He wanted to be alone—to lay out some plan, to arrange his ideas. How was he, should he indeed be so fortunate as to liberate Anastasia from her imprisonment in the seraglio, and to get her out of the gardens unobserved—how was he to conceal her, even for the short time he was to remain in Constantinople, and then convey her out of the city? What would his uncle say if so daring an undertaking should come to his knowledge?

All these reflections and many more which had not occurred to him during his conversation with the old woman, passed with rapidity through his mind, and filled him with the utmost perplexity; nevertheless he was obliged immediately to dress and hasten to his uncle's salon, and it was not until a late hour, wearied

and fatigued with the exertion of trying to be agreeable, and to reply intelligibly to trifling observations and vapid conversation, a word of which he did not hear, that he at last found himself alone in his own apartment, and able to reflect calmly upon all that had past.

De Montfort did not repent of his promise to Glaphyra—far from it, he was more than ever determined to risk his life for the betrothed of the friend, who had so gallantly saved that life ; as, indeed, but for Ivan Michaelis, his bloody and unknown grave would have been long since in the Transylvanian forest, or the waters of the Olta Alp would have hidden his unburied corpse. But the difficulties which environed his undertaking seemed to multiply upon a nearer inspection, and it was not until the morn had well nigh broke, that, after having thought upon and rejected a thousand expedients, he at length decided upon the course to be pursued.

He saw that to linger even an hour in Constantinople, after he had released Anastasia,

would be to run the risk of having her speedily re-captured, and himself exposed to serious inconvenience. He therefore determined to arrange for his immediate departure from the city, and instead of going by land and taking the same route as that by which he had arrived, to hire a vessel to carry him and his attendants as far as Anada a sea-port town on the Black Sea about a day's sail from Constantinople, from whence he could easily conduct Anastasia to the village where her parents resided, as he recollected having heard from Ivan that it was not more than two day's easy journey from that part of the coast.

Having made up his mind upon this point, De Montfort lay down for an hour or two to rest. He however rose early, and then, without mentioning his intention to his valet, went to Tophana and hired a small vessel to take him with his luggage and servants to Anada on the following day, with the understanding that she

was to sail at dawn, in order to arrive at Anada before the close of evening.

He then waited upon his uncle, the Ambassador, and informed him, that he had changed his plans relative to his departure, and, instead of going direct by land, would coast for a short way along the Black Sea, and so enjoy once more the enchanting scenery of the Bosphorus; and, as the wind was now fair, and might change if he delayed sailing, he hoped his uncle would forgive him for bidding him adieu a day or two sooner than he had at first intended, telling him that he had arranged everything for his departure by sea on the morrow.

The Ambassador was grieved to find that this was the last day he was to enjoy the society of his nephew, but he was not surprised at De Montfort's thus wishing to have a last excursion on the Bosphorus, and his intention of coasting as far as Anada, seemed very rational, notwith-

standing it would take him some way out of the direct route, the heat of the weather rendering a voyage much more agreeable than land travelling. He therefore, after expressing his regrets, only stipulated, that his nephew should give him as much of his time as now remained, and told him that he expected he would spend the rest of the day with him. This De Montfort promised to do, although, under present circumstances, it would render his undertaking the more difficult as he foresaw he could not possibly get away from his uncle's palace until very near midnight.

He now sought his valet, Francois, and telling him that he proposed leaving Constantinople in a sailing vessel, at break of day on the following morning, bade him get all the luggage and servants, on board the craft which he had hired, and which was now lying at anchor, a short distance from the shore, ready to weigh, with the exception of two of the

stoutest and most trustworthy of his attendants, who were good rowers.

These, with the valet, were to remain on shore, and as he himself should not be able to leave the Ambassador's, until towards midnight, they were to wait at the quay of Tophana, with a small light boat belonging to the vessel, until he should join them, and as the hour would be late, they had better be well armed.

He likewise desired François to purchase for him, one of the large market baskets, full of fruit and vegetables, which the peasantry were accustomed to bring in from the country, during the cool of the evening, in order to have them fresh for the morning's sale, and filling it with the choicest fruits, vegetables, and flowers, to have it in the boat, ready to take on board.

François promised to obey his master's orders implicitly, and was immediately in all

the bustle of preparation for a speedy departure, while De Montfort, with a mind more at ease, now that all his arrangements were made, returned to his uncle, to pass the intervening hours as well as he could, till the arrival of the time appointed for his hazardous undertaking. The Ambassador, finding that his nephew was so soon to leave him, had that day invited a larger party than usual to dinner.

De Montfort, determined to banish thought from his mind for the present, met his friends and acquaintances with more gaiety than was his wont, answering with playful good-humour, the railleries of some, on his fickleness of purpose, and parrying with skill the offers of others, to accompany him as far as Anada.

All were sorry to lose him, for though many, who had known him in Paris as a gay trifler like themselves, considered him strangely changed in his manners and pursuits, yet even those most uncongenial to him in his altered mood, had been won to like him, by his cour-

teous and frank bearing, whilst all allowed, that he possessed abilities and depth of information, which they had never dreamed of discovering in him formerly. And De Montfort was changed, for if the late chagrins and untoward circumstances, in which he had found himself so suddenly plunged, had made him thoughtful, reserved, and fond of solitude, they had likewise awakened dormant energies, tastes, and powers, in his soul, which had been stifled and almost quenched, by the meretricious pleasures and enervating atmosphere of a Court.

As De Montfort feared it would be, midnight was fast approaching, before his uncle would allow him to depart. Not knowing his intention of going on board that night, many of his friends proposed making their last adieus to him in the morning, and on this point, De Montfort thought it best not to undeceive them. He now hastened to the Quay of Tophana, and found the boat ready with his

three servants, as he had directed. Leaping into it, instead of desiring them to make for the ship, he, to their great surprise, ordered them to pull as hard as they could for Seraglio Point, and, when pretty close to it, bade them muffle their oars, and get as near the Seraglio Gardens as possible. The young moon was not yet risen, which rather favoured their enterprise, as, lovely as she is, her rays would only have rendered them more liable to detection, and the stars gave them sufficient light to direct their course.

Arrived at the other side, they ran the boat beneath the shade of a projecting rock.

De Montfort, with François and one of the rowers, landed, leaving the other to take care of the boat, and after an anxious search for several minutes, at length perceived the little gate or wicket, which Glaphyra had described. The young Baron dreaded the possibility that Glaphyra might not have been able to procure the key, and tried the lock with an unsteady

hand, but the wicket yielded to his touch, and he and his followers immediately found themselves within those delicious gardens, forbidden to every eye but those of their inmates, and which have so often been the theme of the poet and the romance writer.

And De Montfort inly prayed that this gate, which had so often seen the murdered remains of beauty dragged through it, and thrown into the Bosphorus, might now afford a safe mode of escape to the fair Anastasia.

Pausing for a few seconds after he had closed the wicket, De Montfort looked around him, but all was dark and silent. Perfumes from a thousand odoriferous shrubs and flowers, floated on the air, and the hush of night was only broken by the song of the nightingale, and the dash of falling waters.

By the light of the stars, he perceived the pathway which Glaphyra had mentioned, and noiselessly following with his two attendants,

the route which she had so accurately pointed out, that it was impossible he could lose his way, soon saw glistening in the star-light, the white marble fountain, decorated with the figure of a dragon, from whose mouth poured forth the rush of waters he had heard, while the flickering of a lamp from a high lattice, in a dark mass of building, not far from the fountain, shewed him that he had reached the appointed spot.

Moving stealthily through the thick shrubs with François, and bidding his other servant remain beside the fountain, De Montfort reached the building, and softly clapped his hands three times.

Presently he was aware of the descent of a silken ladder from the open lattice, and making François secure the ropes firmly at the bottom, De Montfort mounted the ladder, and rapidly ascending to the top, paused and looked into the apartment. The room was gorgeous with eastern magnificence. Rich carpets and cus-

sions of the choicest embroidery, were spread on the marble floor, and gold, porphyry, and jacinth, met the eye in every direction. But De Montfort beheld nothing of all this; he only saw the slight female figure, closely veiled, who was kneeling, apparently in prayer, while Glaphyra was bending over her, as if joining in her supplications.

On hearing a rustling at the window, the latter started, hastily raised the young girl from her kneeling position, and embracing her fondly, drew her towards the window. then murmuring thanks, and invoking blessings on De Montfort, she placed the trembling, half-fainting Anastasia in his arms, and extinguishing the lamp, watched them until they reached the ground in safety, and then saw them quickly disappear, amidst the thick foliage.

Noiselessly, almost breathlessly, they now retraced, with speed, the path by which they had entered, and finding the wicket open, as they had left it, emerged from the gardens, and

sought the sea-shore. Here they found the boat, so well concealed beneath the shadow of the rock, that they could not perceive it themselves, until they came quite close to it.

De Montfort now endeavoured with a few kind, encouraging words, which he knew not if she understood, to cheer the spirits of his timid companion, who trembled violently as she hung upon his arm, then ordering the market basket to be cleared of the heavy vegetables and fruit, he gently laid her at the bottom of it, covering her over with the lighter portion of its contents. This being arranged he ordered his men to pull direct for the vessel, informing them, that if they breathed a word of the enterprise in which they had been engaged, or gave their companions on board the slightest hint of his proceedings, he would immediately dismiss them from his service, and allow them to find their way back to France as well as they could. François, and the two other servants, heartily glad to be clear of the seraglio gardens, imagin-

ing it to be a very hazardous love affair in which their master had been engaged, and not considering the danger even yet to be past, swore inviolable secrecy; and, on reaching the vessel, conveyed with great care their perilous cargo on board, which appeared, in the eyes of the Turkish master of the vessel and his seamen, to be a very appropriate provision for the voyage.

François was ordered to keep a strict watch beside the basket, which being deposited under an awning was shaded from the heat of the sun, and De Montfort took his station not far off. The dawn of day by this time streaking the heavens with a faint light, and the wind being favourable, the little vessel weighed anchor, and they were soon out of the harbour making their way up the Bosphorus.

Refreshingly did the morning breeze play through the sails and rigging of the little craft as she lightly skimmed over the blue waters; the rising sun dispelling the soft mists that

hung in curling wreaths around, revealed every wooded promontory and indenture of the romantic coast, showing here and there the immense oriental plane trees raising their heads from amidst the surrounding foliage, while as the day advanced, the lovely palace and gardens of Buyuk Deré—fit residence for some eastern Peri—burst upon the eye.

Soon the Giant's Mountain came in sight, and passing the castles on either side, at the extremity of the Bosphorus, they found themselves coasting along the margin of the shore, and towards the end of the day were landed at Anada.

Fearful that any discovery of what his basket contained might take place at Anada and coming to the knowledge of the master of the vessel, might be repeated by him at Constantinople, and so reach the ear of his uncle, De Moutfort hired mules immediately, and, with his servants and luggage, although it was now late, took the road to a small village about a

mile and a half distant, thinking he should be much more secure there from detection than at Anada. On entering a wood midway, under favour of the dusk of evening, and seeing that they were quite unobserved, he released the fair fugitive from her concealment, whom he found to be, to all appearance, more dead than alive. Some cordial being administered to her, however, she soon revived, and De Montfort, wrapping her in a large cloak, placed her on one of the mules, and walking beside her, supported her until she was perfectly recovered. As soon as she had strength to speak she poured forth her thanks in broken Italian, and after a passionate burst of tears, which seemed to relieve her full heart, was able to listen to the kind words and congratulations of De Montfort on her escape. He now spoke to her of her betrothed lover, Ivan Michaelis, and informed her how much he himself had been indebted to him, relating to her the adventure in the woods of Transylvania, and their subsequent jour-

neyings together. This conversation re-animated the spirits of the poor Anastasia, and she soon felt no sentiment but that of joy at her liberation, and gratitude to her deliverer, while her eyes sparkled with pleasure, and a bright flush crossed her pale cheek, as De Montfort spoke of her lover, but all this, the darkness concealed from his observation. They soon arrived at the village, and put up at the little inn, where De Montfort passed her for his sister, and hired a female attendant to wait upon her, and accompany her as far as Umar Fakih, where, he informed the good people of the inn, they were going to spend some time.

The following day they reached Kirk Ik-lysee, where they remained that night, and towards the evening of the next day, De Montfort had the happiness of placing the young girl in the arms of her disconsolate parents. And now, when the fair Anastasia presented him to the good old people, as her

deliverer, and recounted the dangers he had exposed himself to, in order to compass her escape from the Harem, De Montfort felt that in spite of the coldness which had crept round his heart, and made him forswear all woman-kind, had it not been for the friendship which he had conceived for Ivan, and the obligation he was under to him, the fair Greek might have proved as dangerous an enslaver, as ever was bewitching damsel in old romance, to the fortunate knight who had released her from "durance vile."

But as it was, though he could not help acknowledging to himself, that she was truly a prize, worthy of being sent to a Sultan, and that Zobeide might well dread the power of her beauty, still he experienced no sentiment, but that of joy at being the means of restoring her to her lover, and at parting, he pressed her hand to his lips, and listening to her innocent regrets at his departure, while tears and smiles seemed to mingle in her bright black

eyes, he bade her adieu with a light heart, and prayed her sometimes to speak of him, to his good friend, Ivan Michaelis.

All this time Ivan was absent, ignorant of the perils his beloved Anastasia had endured.

Some time after this, Glaphyra found means to escape from Constantinople, and to make her way to Umar Fakihi, never again to be separated from her attached foster child.

CHAPTER XIII.

Ite voi, che chiudeste
L'orribil fera, a dar l'usato segno
Della futura caccia : ite svegliando
Gli occhi col corno, e con la voce i cori.

GUARINI.

Such health and gaiety of heart enjoy
The houseless rovers of the sylvan world ;
And, breathing wholesome air, and wand'ring much,
Need other physic none to heal th' effects
Of loathsome diet, penury and cold.

COWPER.

DE MONTFORT had written a few lines from Umar Fakihi in order to apprise Count Herman of his approaching visit ; he was not

therefore surprised, although very much gratified on reaching Rothenthurm, to meet his friend there, who had come with a party of his vassals, to assure him in person of the joy he felt at again seeing him, and the honour and pleasure that he should have in entertaining him at his poor castle.

There was an air of proud satisfaction, of calm content in the noble countenance of the Count—a looking forth of joy in the dark eye, that was a stranger to it when De Montfort had met him before, which whispered to the young Baron, that the dearest wish of his noble friend's heart had been fulfilled, and this anticipation was confirmed when, after a slight pause, the Count added—

“The Lady Una, my beloved wife, will feel equal pleasure with myself in having you as her guest, and I hope our united efforts will induce you to remain with us much longer than the very short time you have specified.”

De Montfort was truly rejoiced, and his manner shewed it, as he inquired with much interest for the Lady Una. The Count thanked him, and pressed his hand warmly, but he made no reference to former scenes, and De Montfort saw that a tear was trembling in his eye—it was a tear of pleasure, the overflowing of a happy heart too full to speak.

The Count now led his young friend along the same route which he had formerly travelled with Ivan, and leaving the old church where the unhappy marriage of the Lady Una had taken place on the left, De Montfort found that they were on their way towards her castle on the banks of the Aluta.

During their ride De Montfort learned that Ivan had taken service with one of the German princes, and was fast rising both in rank and consideration, being esteemed a very good officer.

As they approached the castle the Count

observed, that he and his family now lived alternately here and at his ancestral residence in the neighbourhood of Hermanstadt, and as they drew near to it, De Montfort perceived that it was a strongly fortified building, with moat and keep, well calculated as a secure abode on the borders of a set of turbulent neighbours. Indeed, when well garrisoned it had frequently set at defiance the attacks of the Turks, who had formerly often been in the habit of making incursions into Transylvania.

The Lady Una received her guest with ingenuous demonstrations of pleasure. She had heard him spoken of by her lord with frequent commendation, and this was quite sufficient to ensure him a warm reception from a heart that knew no greater happiness than that of anticipating, if possible, the wishes of her husband.

Lovely as was the Lady Una, when, pale as marble, De Montfort had seen her kneeling beside Count Maurice before the altar, in the old

church which he had recently passed by, her beauty was now a thousand times enhanced by the bright bloom, and the air of innocent joy that overspread her youthful face ; for although two years had nearly elapsed since De Montfort had first beheld her, she still seemed as if but just emerging from girlhood.

Her fair hair, glistening with that shade of gold, as if the sun had thrown one of his bright beams upon it, hung in waving ringlets upon her alabaster shoulders, her small features were perfectly regular, and her skin and complexion possessed that transparency of hue and colour which belongs almost exclusively to infant years ;—one glance of her deep blue eye, however, revealed, that all the passionate feelings of the woman were rife in the depths of her heart.

That soft eye seemed ever to watch every change and turn in the countenance of Herman, as if she would have read his inmost thoughts, and her ears appeared to drink in

every word that fell from his lips. Graceful as a young fawn but timid and silent before a stranger, she did the honours of her castle with blushing earnestness, leaving Count Herman to support all the conversation; yet it was not the silence of ignorance, or inability to converse, but proceeded, partly from the bashfulness incident to her very retired life, and partly from that admiration, as well as love, which she bore to her husband.

If in his lofty bearing, and more matured years, Count Herman resembled the oak, the Lady Una might truly be compared to the sweet wild honey suckle that twined around its branches for support.

Numerous were the menials and retainers who filled the hall of Count Herman, and with the old feudal hospitality every beggar was relieved at his gate, while his serfs with their wives and children were continually thronging his kitchen, so that his family appeared of countless extent, and the cook and butler needed

to have always a good supply of provisions in the buttery.

His estates were now, however, very large, as the inheritance of Lady Una, and of Count Maurice, which had fallen to her, added to what he derived from his own ancestors, had made him one of the most powerful nobles in Transylvania.

High as was the opinion De Montfort had entertained of Count Herman, it was raised still higher by his abode at the castle.

There he saw his noble host shine in all the virtues of domestic life, ameliorating and improving the condition of his vassals, and cultivating those tastes and pursuits which the early devotion of his youth to arms had not formerly given him leisure to follow.

The manly and passionate tenderness, which he evinced for his young countess, met by her with a blushing timidity and a proud consciousness, but ill-concealed, that she was entire mistress of his heart, while it showed De Mont-

fort the fair picture of two beings whose happiness was concentrated in that of each other, made him frequently start, while a bitter pang short through his breast—a pang not of envy but of regret, to think that his own unhappy marriage—the adamant chain which bound his destiny in this world—would prevent him from ever hoping that his domestic hearth might be cheered by a being as fond and fair.

No soft eye would ever watch for him—no bright smile would ever welcome him when he returned weary from the chase, or fatigued with the mental toil to which he had of late habituated himself.

The imperious will of a monarch had united Isabelle to him, and mutual disinclination had dissevered them for ever.

These thoughts De Montfort strove to banish, as often as they crossed his mind. Of what use were they, but to throw a dark cloud over his existence. Love was not for him, but honour, fame, distinction, might be attained—

yes, fame should be his mistress—he would seek her in the service of his country, and win her amidst the toils of political life.

Thus he often mused, and springing upon his noble steed, would plunge into the intricacies of the forests, forgetting, in the engrossing interest of the boar hunt, all his disappointments and retrospections.

One of the most favourite amusements among the higher classes of society, at this period, was boar hunting, and De Montfort fully enjoyed this pastime with the Count, in the midst of the wild forests, which extended round the Castle on every side.

Nevertheless, one day De Montfort was more than usually tormented with harassing reflections, which he could not dissipate, and which, even in the midst of the chase, came to disturb his mind, clinging the more pertinaciously to him, as the time now approached when he purposed to terminate his visit to the Count. He therefore endeavoured, by putting

his horse at his full speed, to fly, as it were, from himself, and to forget them, and all the world beside.

Leaving the Count and his train far behind he at length found himself alone, and entangled in a savage wilderness. The distant bay of the dogs had died upon his ear, and no sound of human life broke the solitude around him.

He dismounted from his tired steed, and looked upon the craggy rocks, stunted trees, and marshy ground, into which he had wandered, and as the spot was perfectly unknown to him, although he had so frequently hunted in those forests, he knew not how he should retrace his steps, or extricate himself from it. He stood for some minutes looking up and down, and listening if he could catch the bay of the dogs in the distance, but nothing was heard in this profound solitude, save the wind that swept through the branches of the trees.

Presently he saw a shepherd's dog emerge from a thicket hard by. The animal gave a slight bark, as if to attract his attention, and then seemed to look wistfully in his face.

De Montfort, who was very fond of dogs, immediately approached him, caressing him and patting him on the head—he was glad to see the dog, as he imagined his master could not be far distant, and that from him, he might learn in what direction to turn his steps.

The dog was pleased with his notice, and wagged his tail; presently he licked his hand, and in a few moments, seizing the skirt of his hunting cloak between his teeth, gave him a gentle pull. De Montfort disengaged his cloak, and patting the dog's head, spake kindly to him.

This seemed only to embolden the animal, who, seizing him by the cloak again, looked

up piteously in his face with an imploring whine, and gave him a stouter pull.

De Montfort was much surprised at the dog's pertinacity, and could not help calling to mind, the various stories he had heard related in the Castle hall, of the spirits who haunted those forests. Laughing at himself for such thoughts, and being curious to see why the animal wished to lead him on, he took his horse by the bridle, and made a movement to follow, which the dog seemed perfectly to understand and running on before, turning his head every now and then, as if to see that De Montfort was after him, paused at length on the brink of a deep ravine, into which he plunged.

De Montfort followed to the edge of the cliff and looked down its perpendicular side. At first he saw nothing but the sheer rock covered here and there with brambles; however upon a more narrow inspection, he perceived the dog sitting at the entrance of what appeared

to be a hollow in the rock, nearly half way down the side of the cliff, and soon he saw a little hand put forth to pat him and heard some words in a strange tongue addressed to him, as if caressingly, by the feeble voice of a child. The dog now looked up and seeing De Montfort gazing down into the ravine, ran up the side of the rock, and again pulled him by the cloak. De Montfort immediately comprehended that the poor animal wanted his aid for some human being, and tying his horse to a tree proceeded to attempt the descent. It was with difficulty that he effected it, as the bushes, full of whortleberries which edged the abyss, gave him but little assistance when he managed to lay hold of them. At last after much scrambling, and tearing his hands and his clothes, De Montfort contrived to arrive at the spot where the dog sat wagging his tail, and perceived that the drift of the faithful animal had been to bring him to this place, where lay, pale and bruised, a boy of about six years old. A

broken bush full of whortleberries lay beside him, and the fragments of a little rush basket, intercepted in its descent by a twig just below, on which it hung, shewed at a glance that in seeking for the fruit, the child had fallen into the cleft. Some rock or branch had probably arrested his fall and he had managed to creep into this hole. The boy, exhausted as he was, eyed De Montfort with a searching, almost a startled glance—then pointed to his ankle which was much swelled and covered with congealed blood, making signs, that he could not move it and by his accents appearing to solicit help.

Securing a steady footing for himself as well as he could, on this dizzy resting place, De Montfort now took a hunting flask and some biscuit from his pocket and making the child first drink a small portion of brandy in order to revive him, gave him the biscuit which he devoured ravenously—the poor little fellow however not forgetting to throw as many

morsels to his faithful dog as he swallowed himself. De Montfort then lifted the child from the ground who all this time had continued to gaze on him with his keen black eyes and at last, in spite of the pain he was in and his inability to stand, the boy clapped his little hands with exclamations of joy and surprise as if he had suddenly recognized a friend, and De Montfort on looking at him attentively, discovered all at once that this must be indeed his old acquaintance, the gipsy boy on whom he had formerly bestowed the chain, at the time, when benighted on the Carpathian mountains, the old gipsy grandsire had entertained him and his friend Ivan, so hospitably.

The difficulty now, was how to get him up the cliff, but the boy soon settled this point, by making signs to De Montfort that he would go upon his back, which being done and the gipsy holding on with the grip of a cat, De Montfort soon had him out of his perilous posi-

tion and placing him before him on his horse, was now only puzzled to discover in what direction he was to proceed. This perplexity however the child removed by pointing across the northern part of the wild marsh, and then to his dog who trotting before them, seemed perfectly to understand that he was to show the way home, while De Montfort sure that this *avant courier* would lead them to the boy's habitation wherever that might be, followed in his wake.

After keeping the dog in sight for above two miles, the forest, broken by pieces of marshy ground, appearing still wilder and more lonely, they at length emerged from it, and De Montfort perceived that they approached an encampment of gipsies. Before they had quite reached it, they had been discovered by some scouts loitering outside, and the child and dog recognised, so that when they entered the encampment there seemed to be a general commotion, and an appearance of great joy at the return of

the lost one, and soon the old grandsire came forth to welcome his grandchild, and to bless and thank his deliverer.

From the account of the old man it appeared, that the child had been missing for two days. He had sent on every side to look for him, but in consequence of the boy's rambles having been always before in a different direction from the course he must have taken that day, he concluded his people must have neglected searching the marshy ground. He added that Zanina had left the boy in his charge while she went with a party of her friends to try her fortune in some of the large cities, and that should anything have happened to the boy during her absence it would have broken his heart.

One of the gipsy women, who had immediately taken charge of the boy on his being lifted off the horse, now came to report, that although much bruised, and his left ankle badly sprained, the little urchin was otherwise uninjured—no bone being broken.

He was then taken to his grandfather, and being placed at his feet, employed himself in alternately caressing his dog, who took up his station beside him, and in gazing with a look of great admiration on De Montfort, while the latter was conversing with the old man.

De Montfort rejoiced that his thus losing his way in the forest had been productive of such beneficial results, and after telling the old man how happy he was to have been of service to his grandchild, requested a guide to the castle of the Lady Una. The old gipsy immediately selected a stout youth from the tribe, who knew the country well, to accompany him; and De Montfort, after first partaking of a mess made of boar's flesh, as the old man would not hear of his leaving their abode without taking some refreshment, proceeded on his way home, much surprised to learn from his conductor what an extent of country he had crossed since the morning.

Having informed the old man, in the course of conversation, that he was shortly about to leave that part of the country, and to return to Paris, De Montfort, a few days before his departure, received a missive from the old gipsy enclosing a letter, which he begged De Montfort to be the bearer of to his daughter whom he said, he had good reason to believe was by this time in Paris.

De Montfort smiled at the idea of his being able to discover a poor gipsy woman in the intricacies of Paris, as the direction was so vague as to give him no clue to what might be the place of her abode. He, however, bade the messenger inform the old man, that he would take charge of his letter, and endeavour to discover his daughter.

With many regrets, De Montfort bade adieu to Count Herman and the Lady Una—regrets which on their part, were sincerely reciprocated, and after a journey of some weeks,

without any interruption, except the time devoted to rest, at the different towns and villages through which he passed, he once more found himself within the precincts of Paris, and was soon clasped in the arms of his anxiously expecting father.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Where the impression of mine eye infixing,
Contempt his scornful perspective did lend me,
Which warp’d the line of every other favour ;
Scorned a fair colour, or expressed it stolen ;
Extended or contracted all proportions,
To a most hideous object.

SHAKSPEARE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the prudence of Isabelle, and her freedom from all coquetry, it was impossible that her beauty and wit should not

attract universal admiration, and frequently inspire a warmer sentiment, in a Court so renowned for gallantry, as was that of Louis the Fourteenth, and among all those who followed her footsteps, and haunted her wherever she went, none excelled in amiability and personal endowments, the gay and lively Marquis de Cressy.

He had early left a favourable impression upon the mind of Isabelle, in consequence of the warmth with which he had taken her part, in that conversation, so painful to her feelings, which he had held with De Montfort on the subject of his approaching marriage, and which she had so unfortunately overheard, from the bower where she was seated, in the gardens of Versailles—unfortunately, for it had made an impression on her mind at the time, too vivid to be easily eradicated—the never to be forgotten aversion of De Montfort to the match, and the strong expressions he made use of to

that effect, being indissolubly connected with every recollection of her marriage.

The Marquis, gay, thoughtless, and good-natured, well skilled in all the accomplishments of the day, without any great depth of character, but possessing a lively wit, an inexhaustible share of good-humour and vivacity, with an endless variety and easy flow of conversation, was the idol of all the women, and the most esteemed and sought after by them, of all the fashionable young men at the Court. If he had admired Isabelle when he first saw her at Paris, despite all the disadvantages with which she was then surrounded—her grief for the recent loss of her father—her disinclination to participate in those gaieties, into which she was nevertheless obliged, by the wishes of the King, to enter, added to the constant mortification she felt at the prospect of the constrained marriage, to which she was necessitated to submit at that period, dimming the lustre of her

personal attractions, and enveloping her in a melancholy silence and reserve, which some, and De Montfort amongst them, considered to arise from an awkward bashfulness, and the want of a cultivated understanding—how much lovelier did he find her now, when he beheld her embellished by all the charms, which serenity of mind and an enchanting wit, could give to her natural beauty, heightened as it was by that courtly air of fashion, which, as a beautifully designed frame, sets off a fine picture to the best advantage, placed her loveliness in the most attractive point of view. How often did he wish, that the King had bestowed her hand upon him, who would have prized and valued the fair gift, instead of uniting her to the careless De Montfort.

All the conquests which De Cressy had ever made, appeared to him now to be perfectly valueless in comparison to that which he would achieve, should he be able to win the heart of Isabelle. He had discernment enough to per-

ceive, and sense enough to esteem her the more for the discovery, that hers was a heart very different from that of most of the beauties moving within the circle of the French court, and laying out his plans accordingly, carefully concealed his furtive hopes in the depths of his soul, and only professing friendship and an admiration for her various talents payed her the most delicate attention, veiled with an insidious respect, being ever on the watch to come to her aid, as it were accidentally, to shield her from the more open and often irksome attentions of other gallants, and so well did the dangerous De Cressy manœuvre, that Isabelle looked upon him with an eye of friendship, and considered him as by far the most agreeable of all the young noblemen at Court,

As the ready wit and polished conversation of De Cressy made him a welcome guest at every re-union, he easily insinuated himself into the society of Madame de Sevigne, and of

all the other friends where Isabelle was most frequently to be met with, and though it was a circle he had not formerly much affected, yet he managed with such admirable skill, and so effectively that there was scarcely a house to which Isabelle was in the practice of resorting, that without appearing in the least degree to seek it, he had not soon an access pressed upon him.

Thus Isabelle was in the habit of meeting De Cressy everywhere, and receiving from him a thousand little unobtrusive acts of kindness, grateful to one who was startled and terrified at more open assiduities.

Since her abode at court she had become more alive to the difficulties and dangers of the situation in which the indifference of De Montfort had placed her, and to which in her chateau in Normandy she had scarcely given a thought—more conscious of the galling nature of the chain by which she was bound, and surrounded as she was by admiration and flattery,

is it a wonder if, without being aware of it herself, a strong sentiment of pique, with a distaste to hearing his name mentioned, and a more than ever eagerness to banish him from her memory took root in her bosom? while as it was supposed that De Montfort's uncle, the ambassador, would remain a considerable time in Constantinople, and as she was satisfied De Montfort would continue with him as long as he could, she was not tormented with any anticipations of speedily seeing him again, particularly as the Count de Beaumont thinking that a sudden surprise might act favourably upon both parties, was careful not to make any allusion to the mandate he had sent his son.

Isabelle's success at Court had far outstripped her father-in-law's most sanguine expectations, and while her beauty and talents flattered his pride, the retenue of her deportment and her indifference to the homage and devotion that assailed her on every side, inspired him with the hope that when De Montfort returned he

would be so struck by her charms, and so anxious to atone for the past, that both forgetting their former disinclination, might be united together at last in the bonds of love.

Ever since Isabelle had obtained a place at Court the old Count had meditated so often and so deeply upon the ultimate healing of the disunion between her and De Montfort, that it was with much difficulty he had restrained himself from entreating his son, at an earlier period, to shorten his stay at Constantinople. Notwithstanding, he wore his years so well, as De Montfort had heard from the young official, this absence gave him a constant uneasiness, and since De Montfort had written to assure him of his speedy compliance with his wishes, he had anxiously counted the weeks now amounting to months, which had intervened between that announcement and his son's appearance in Paris.

De Montfort came, and the heart of the old Count bounded with joy as he held him in his

arms—a joy in which De Montfort participated; and when he saw the tears that stood in his father's eyes and received his fond benediction, his heart smote him for having so long absented himself from his parent.

The Count looked at his son with proud satisfaction—he could not but observe how much he had gained in health and spirits during their separation, while De Montfort on his side, was rejoiced to see, that his father's eye was as bright and his step as firm as when they had last parted.

It was not long before De Montfort opened his projects to his father and dilated upon the advantages he had derived from his sojourn with his uncle at Constantinople. He talked of the satisfaction and pleasure he had found in his new pursuits and of his intention of pursuing, at home, those objects of a laudable ambition, and all this he expressed with a fire and eloquence so new to his delighted father,

that he could hardly recognise in him the gay butterfly of former days.

Everything was thought of and freely discussed between them but Isabelle—her name was never alluded to, and though burning with a desire to recall her to his son's remembrance, the Count de Beaumont as yet, hesitated to touch upon what he feared would be an unwelcome theme. Now that his son was arrived the airy fabric of his hopes began to be shaken and that, which looked upon in perspective, seemed the most probable thing in the world to occur, at the moment that he thought it was within the grasp of certainty, appeared to recede to an immeasurable distance.

It was not until the following day that the Count found courage to mention the name of Isabelle to De Montfort and to inform him of the high situation she now held as one of the *Dames du Palais* to the Queen. De Montfort heard this announcement with as much surprise

as vexation. He had never contemplated the possibility of her residing at Court. A meeting with Isabelle was what he would, under any circumstances, most eagerly have avoided. But now it seemed perfectly inevitable.

The Count saw with much perplexity and dismay the chagrin expressed in his son's countenance—the gloom that overspread it at the mention of Isabelle's name boded but ill for the hopes of the reconciliation between them, which he had cherished. He has not seen her yet thought he, “it is impossible but he must think differently of her then.”

It was however with the greatest difficulty, and not until he had been a week in Paris, that the Count was able to persuade De Montfort to accompany him in a visit of ceremony to Isabelle, who had a suite of apartments in the Palace.

De Montfort knew it was absolutely necessary he should make this visit; yet he shrunk from it as sensitively as he would have done

from the thumb screw or any other instrument of torture, and his father could only induce him to pay it at once, by promising never to put any constraint upon his actions in this respect for the future, and never to interfere in the least between him and Isabelle.

The old Count built much upon this first interview, but he was sadly disappointed.

Isabelle was really not well, and very much flurried, from the announcement of their purposed call, of which her father-in-law had thought it best to give her but a short notice, before they arrived.

She looked pale and distressed, and received De Montfort with a cold and somewhat haughty reserve.

He saw nothing in her, but the inanimate, dejected, weeping bride, he had formerly so reluctantly wedded, and with this remembrance, came the flash of joy that lighted up her countenance, when he told her that he was going to Constantinople.

The Count was grieved to see Isabelle looking so ill and unhappy, and after making many kind inquiries after her health, endeavoured to promote a general conversation, by alluding to some recent incidents at Court, and asking her if she had yet seen *La Bérénice*, which had just been performed at the theatre of the Palais Royal. But he could scarcely elicit a reply—Isabelle had lost her usual self-possession, and De Montfort, on the tenter hooks of anxiety to escape, soon put his father in mind of an engagement, which called them elsewhere. Their departure was a relief to Isabelle—she remained in deep thought for some time, leaning upon the table, near which she had been sitting, her face covered with both her hands. At length the clock struck, and she started from her reverie—in half an hour, she was to attend the Queen.

“It is impossible I can go to-day,” said she, gazing at herself in an opposite mirror. “I

must send an excuse, on the plea of indisposition."

And wrestling with her emotion, she sat down to write a note, but her hand was so unsteady, that she was obliged to lay down the pen.

"The Count was wrong," exclaimed she, "in concealing from me, until this morning, the arrival of the Baron—had I known it sooner, I could have better nerved myself to support it—ah! I have been so happy during his absence, and now—but we are equally indifferent—why should we torment each other?—why should we interfere?"

Thus saying, she resumed her pen, and after blotting two or three sheets of paper, dispatched a tolerably legible note, to excuse her non-appearance.

This visit, so distasteful and irritating to De Montfort, made him resolve to leave Paris directly, and go into the country, which resolution he would no doubt have put into execution in the course of a few days, notwithstanding,

it would militate against all his pre-conceived projects, had not the Count, who feared such might be his determination, procured from the King, without his son's knowledge, an appointment at Court, which he knew he dared not refuse; and De Montfort, very reluctantly, found himself obliged to remain in Paris. However, he soon found that Isabelle's *séjour* there, need not, at least as yet, give him any uneasiness. Isabelle was not to be seen on the *Boulevards* or in the *Champs Elysées*—no glimpse of her caught his eye at the theatre, where, every night, the brilliant genius of Corneille drew tears from many a fair dame, neither was she at any of the Court assemblies, and from dreading to meet her everywhere, he soon began to wonder what had become of her, and to hope, particularly as his father never mentioned her name since the day of their visit, that she must have left Paris.

The presence of Clementine—his once adored Clementine—on the contrary, greeted him

wherever he went; but he turned away from her in disgust—it was in vain, that she tried to regain her old ascendancy over him. De Montfort now saw her in her true colours, and was astonished, how he could ever have been fascinated by so heartless a coquette; while she, eager as formerly, to enlist him in a train of admirers, who had of late very much diminished, was so enraged at his neglect, that she secretly vowed, he should some time or other feel the full wrath of a despised woman.

Meantime, De Montfort's curiosity began to be excited, in some degree, about Isabelle. He had accidentally, and with much surprise heard her beauty, wit, and enchanting grace, descanted on by a knot of young courtiers—many thought she far outshone Madame de Montespan—all lamented her absence from the Court festivities. For the first time he heard—and heard it with a sort of pang, at his neglect in not inquiring after her, that she had been much indisposed, but was so far recovered,

that it was expected, she would be able to resume her usual brilliant position in society.

“De Cressy is in despair,” said one of the group.

“And De Valey has been to Lully, to set to music some verses he has written on her,” replied another.

“Their homage seems to make no impression upon the lovely Baroness,” added a third.

“Some people think that Madame de Montespan begins to be a little afraid of her.”

“She is truly charming, but cold as ice,” said another.

De Montfort now caught the sound of his own name, and feeling his vicinity to the party begin to be very embarrassing, hastily withdrew.

Isabelle witty, talented, beautiful as Madame de Montespan! Impossible!—and he smiled incredulously.

That night De Montfort’s eye scanned every fair face in the Queen’s train at the thea-

tre, and unconsciously turned away disappointed. for Isabelle was not there. For several succeeding nights he watched for her—still Isabelle did not appear; and so much was his curiosity excited at last, that incongruous as it may seem, he became, at the end of three weeks, as desirous to see her and examine what was the enchantment she possessed, which appeared to incline every one in her favour, and made the great Corneille himself lament her absence from a recitation of a new tragedy he was about to bring forth, as he had been at first to fly from every chance of meeting her.

CHAPTER XV.

Una Ninfa sì bella e sì gentile :
Ma che dissi una Ninfa ? Anzi una dea,
Di matutina rosa,
Più fresca e più vezzosa
E più molle, e più candida del cigno ;
Per cui non è sì degno
Pastor' oggi tra noi, che non sospiri,
E non sospiri in vano.

Guarini.

DE MONTFORT had already begun his political career, and was plunging deeply into the ocean of politics ; but while his days and often

part of his nights were devoted to this engrossing pursuit, his evenings were spent at the theatre, or some gay *ré-union*, and not unfrequently at the Court balls, where all the fair and noble in the Court circle were used to assemble.

Already his depth of information and originality of thinking had marked him out as one of the most rising statesmen of the day, and his fond and proud father was deeply gratified whilst he listened to the flattering congratulations that met him wherever he appeared, on his son's success.

It was about this time that De Montfort accompanied his father to a ball given by the Queen, who was just returned, with the ladies of her train, from a short seclusion at the Palace of Versailles.

Despite the bitter chagrin Isabelle had felt at the unexpected return of De Montfort to Paris, she had, during her slight indisposition, and afterwards in the very opportune retire-

ment of the Queen at Versailles, schooled herself so well, examined her position in so many different points of view and called up so much good sense to aid her pride; that she was enabled to make her appearance at this ball looking more lovely and attractive than ever.

The idea of De Montfort's abode in Paris had been at first so insupportable to her, that the impulse of the moment had prompted her to throw up the office she held in the palace, and retire to the old chateau in Normandy; but a little reflection had shown her the indiscretion of such a proceeding, as in relinquishing the patronage of the Queen, she would only have exposed herself the more to the importunate assiduities of the Duke de Coaslin, who had plainly shown her that no seclusion could hide her from his passionate addresses.

On this night De Montfort made sure that he should behold Isabelle, and after he had forced his way through the crowded suite of rooms, and made his obeisance to the Queen,

on looking around, she was the first person that caught his eye; but so different was the brilliant and fascinating Isabelle of the evening, from her to whom he had paid the hurried and reluctant visit on his first arrival, that prepared as he was by the eulogies he had heard of her charms to doubt the evidence of his own senses, he could scarcely imagine it was indeed Isabelle that he now gazed upon.

Isabelle did not observe the entrance of De Montfort and his vicinity to her—she was conversing in a lively strain with the King, who, notwithstanding the presence of Madame de Montespan, was paying her the most flattering attentions. The gallantries of Louis were well known, and De Montfort experienced a feeling of anxiety as he looked at his beautiful and unprotected wife, and recollected to what dangers his neglect exposed her. In a few minutes the King, spying De Montfort, approached, and graciously accosted him, while

De Cressy, ever on the watch, eagerly supplied his place near Isabelle, and a circle of the young and old hovering around, anxious to seize upon the envied position, still shut out De Montfort from her view. De Montfort saw this incense lavished upon Isabelle, whose easy indifference and gay unconsciousness, as she received it, did but add a new charm to her beauty, and he perceived that her sparkling wit and powers of conversation, drew many into her circle whom beauty alone might not perhaps have attracted thither. He would willingly have turned away, but a species of fascination seemed to root him to the spot, and an unaccountable jealousy took possession of his mind, which was not lessened when Isabelle, who had not perceived him before, now recognised, and slightly saluted him with a polite and disengaged, but chilling demeanour, imperceptible most likely to those around, but which the unreasonable De Montfort inwardly

chafed at, particularly when he heard no diminution of wit and gaiety in her conversation with her surrounding admirers.

Whatever Isabelle might have felt she, like a true woman, dissembled, and her cheek did not grow pale, or her eye less bright for the presence of De Montfort, who, in spite of her cold disdain, could not but confess to himself, that he had never seen any one half so beautiful.

Her dress, too, was in perfect taste, and set off her symmetrical figure to the best advantage. Her robe of the finest *point de France*, a present from the Queen, swept the ground in graceful folds—she wore no *coiffure* but three or four small golden bodkins fastened up the loops and tresses of her hair, which a good deal parted on the forehead, shaded her dimpled cheek, and descended in a thousand soft glossy curls upon her neck. Magnificent pearls were interwoven among her curls, and ear-rings formed of diamonds of the first water, gave a

finish to this really splendid though chaste and simple looking dress.

Her beauty and appearance were further enhanced in the eyes of De Montfort by her vicinity to the Marchioness de Varville, who, detesting Isabelle for her youth and loveliness and now more than ever anxious to eclipse her in the presence of De Montfort, endeavoured by a thousand little arts to attract his attention and to form a circle round herself at a little distance.

De Montfort could not but observe that Clementine had lost as much in the two years he had been absent, as Isabelle had gained, and that as if conscious of the flight of youth she endeavoured by cosmetics and surreptitious aids and by the most magnificent and shewy attire to make up for the encroachments of time.

Her dress was therefore in a most extravagant taste being a petticoat of black velvet dazzling with costly embroideries of gold and silver, and a scarf *couleur de feu* with massive

embroideries similar to her petticoat, while jewels sparkled on her person in every direction.

This dress which made her look like an actress, cost an immense sum of money and indeed people said she was ruining her husband as fast as she could by her unbounded extravagance.

Isabelle, had in reality studied her attire for this evening with more care than she was wont to do—never had she been more admired, more flattered, more followed than at this ball and never before, notwithstanding her apparent disregard of it, had this admiration, this assiduous attention been so grateful, so secretly prized by her, as on this night. That which was valueless and commonplace before, had all of a sudden, from some hidden cause which she did not attempt to investigate, become of worth and price in her estimation. What was it that thus enhanced the value of the homage she had always so slighted? It was a secret though

unacknowledged consciousness, that De Montfort was present, and that he must now be aware, how eagerly, were she free, others would seek the hand which he had so reluctantly received.

Nevertheless, despite all this triumph—this incense, Isabelle was dissatisfied with herself as she laid her head upon her pillow—she was vexed that whatever she thought of, wherever she tried to fix her ideas, the image of De Montfort appeared before her as she had seen him at the ball. It was with no pleasurable sensation that his idea recurred to her, but she was unable to banish it. It was true that among the flower of the court assembled there that evening, no one outshone, few rivalled De Montfort in personal appearance—but it was not of that Isabelle thought—it was not upon that she dwelt, although in her secret soul she would not have been able to controvert it. It was of the bitter chagrin he must feel, which his grave and haughty air shewed her he *did*

feel at the recollection of the bonds which bound him to her.

“It is of no use to think of it,” said she with a heavy sigh, “would we were both free.”

Then she fell asleep but her dreams were strange and wild. De Montfort mingled with them all, but one whom she had long taught herself to forget likewise vaguely and indistinctly crossed her path—again seemed to swear an eternal love to her and to claim her early vows. Then she thought, as once before in her dreams, that he wore the aspect of De Montfort and clasped her to his heart.

She awoke from her fevered sleep with a start, and looked around. The rays of a bright moon fell upon the parquettèd floor of her room, and threw a stream of light upon her couch, but the more remote corners of the spacious apartment, remaining in deep obscurity, seemed, to her still dreamlike senses, to be peopled with a thousand vague and fantastic forms. Still she saw De Montfort, and now

his countenance wore a look of stern reproach. At last she composed herself to sleep again, but her rest was uneasy—masquerading figures, in every variety of costume, flitted around her pillow—strange faces appeared to mow, and mock at her—now she found herself involved in the most incongruous adventures, depicted with all the vivid minuteness of reality—then hurrying through, and unable to extricate herself from the interminable passages and galleries of an old castle, she endeavoured to escape from the pursuing steps of the dreaded De Montfort.

Again she awoke, and weary of her fruitless efforts at composure, rose, and throwing on a morning robe, opened a glass door, and entered a balcony belonging to her apartments, which overlooked the gardens.

All nature was in the calm of a delicious repose. The dawn of morning, though very near, had not yet dimmed the brightness of the sparkling stars, among which, the planet Venus

shone conspicuous, with a soft and steady lustre. Isabelle leaned over the iron rails of the balcony, and enjoyed the stillness of the perfumed air, and the feverishness, incident upon her troubled slumbers, was dissipated by degrees.

“From whence can arise those broken and fantastic images, we behold in dreams,” thought she. “Memory and imagination may riot in the fragments of past scenes, and arrange them in wild confusion; but from whence comes it, that events beyond the range of all possibility, thoughts that the mind has never contemplated, in her wildest day-dreams, thus come before us in the visions of the night, with all the force and garb of reality?”

“Is it to reveal to us the picture of insanity? —is it to shew us what germs of madness lurk in every mind, and what are the wild vagaries that haunt us, when the noble structure of reason is overthrown?”

The Count de Beaumont, who was at the

ball, saw with rapture, the sensation which his beautiful daughter-in-law's appearance in society, after her late indisposition, occasioned. He had entirely ceased to speak of her to De Montfort, since the visit in which he had accompanied him, and if his chagrin was then excessive, at seeing Isabelle look so ill, his joy now far out-balanced it, and he watched with secret pleasure, the impression, which he judged she had made this evening on De Montfort, by the constancy with which his eyes appeared to follow all her movements.

He was disappointed, however, when, on the following morning, De Montfort, though conversing of various persons, he had met the preceding night at the Palace, never made the slightest allusion to her, and the Count did not deem it prudent, to venture any remark himself.

A fortnight stole away, and few evenings past, in which De Montfort and Isabelle did not meet in the Court circle, and indeed, if

Isabelle had wished ever so much to avoid the presence of the Baron, she could not now compass it, as she had no plea of indisposition, and the gentle Queen, who was prodigal towards her of the warmest marks of affection, was never happy, unless she was in her train; while the King, a passionate admirer of beauty and of talent, always remarked the absence of one, so well suited to adorn every fête—still the same excessive reserve existed between them—a cold salutation on the part of Isabelle, and one as chilling, if not more so, on that of De Montfort,

Yet, with all this apparent indifference, he watched her with a jealous eye, and vainly tried to hide from himself, what daggers to his heart were the sweet smiles and enchanting grace, with which he fancied she met every one but himself. This fascination, which she exercised over him, from the night he had been so struck with her appearance at the Queen's ball, was entirely independent of his will. He was

startled at a passion so suddenly awakened in his bosom, for an object, from whom he had formerly fled with such earnestness of purpose, and he often tried to turn away, when he found his spell-bound steps arrested in that part of the room, where he could, unobserved, best look at and listen to her. The circumstance that she was his wife—that she could never belong to another—seemed but to widen the abyss that separated them, by impressing on him the idea, that he could never dare hope to win a heart, that must have long since learned to detest him.

He tried, by engaging in public affairs, to fly from those tormenting thoughts, but while applause greeted his brilliant career, and the politicians of the day saw in him a new star arisen amongst them, the amusements of the evening brought no relaxation to his mind, for there he saw Isabelle, beautiful, gay, and indifferent.

“It is my own fault, said he, one night as

he returned to his hotel, more enchanted by her beauty—more stung by her disdain than he had yet been. “I ought to entreat an interview with Isabelle—I ought to throw myself at her feet—ask pardon for the past, and sue for her forgiveness. But alas! what can be the result? We have parted by mutual consent. Can I forget her joy on the morning of our bridal day when I spoke of my departure for Constantinople?—Can I doubt her dislike?—may I not read it in her manner—and even should I wring from her an unwilling consent to be indeed mine—could I, by the intervention of my good father, prevail on her proud spirit to forget my past neglect, of what avail would it be to my happiness if her heart, as now, rejects me? If I was again to see the pallid cheek and tearful eye with which she greeted me on my late arrival in Paris, they would be daggers in my bosom. No, unless Isabelle can love me as I feel I could love her—as

I do love her, I never should be happy. No, I must wait—I must try to win her affection—to efface in some degree past remembrances. But has she a heart to win?—Lively and brilliant as she looks, may she not secretly weep over the unhappy bond that unites us?—Unhappy!—yes, unhappy, for were we both free and unconstrained, I too, like others, might seek, by devotion and passionate love, to win a heart that I now fear is lost to me for ever.”

Thus did the too sensitive De Montfort reason—thus did he torment himself, and thus was the claim he possessed over Isabelle, not only valueless in his eyes, but converted, by his morbid imagination, into a source of torture, ten thousand times worse than that it had formerly, but from how different a cause, inflicted upon him. And such has, and ever will be, the waywardness of the human heart—rejecting that which is most valuable from

caprice—then prizing the lost treasure most, when it is found to be irretrievably gone.

De Montfort though young in years, was from his early residence at Court, and his passionate attachment to Clementine, well versed in all the arts of coquetry which the Court beauties were wont to practice, and could at a glance discover the unaffected simplicity and freedom from vanity, which in the midst of her attractions were pre-eminent in Isabelle.

He did not however see that her cold reserve towards himself, which in his eyes wore the semblance of disdain, was in fact but the natural reflection of his own deportment. Perhaps had his manner been different, hers might have relaxed. Conscious that Isabelle must be aware that in his opposition to their marriage, he had been actuated by a passion for an unworthy object, as well as by dislike to have his affections constrained, and certain that his pre-

sence much be insupportable to her, for *him*, there always seemed a magic circle drawn around her, as if by the wand of some enchanter, within which he did not dare to venture.

Yet when apparently most neglectful, he was in reality more occupied by her. Sometimes the tones of her voice, whether in singing or speaking, had an unaccountable effect upon him, particularly if he was not tortured by beholding the attentions that were paid to her by others.

They came over him like the breath of the early dawn of morning, reviving as it were in his soul, the first sensations of youth and love. —Not like the tumultuous passion he had felt for Clementine—but sweet as the melody of distant music—as the song of birds—as the fragrance of spring flowers—connected in an indefinable manner in his imagination with everything that was soft and pure, and genuine

in his early life—As if some spell had re-awakened all the beautiful, first, fresh, vivifying sentiments that were fostered in his mind before his affections had been entangled and sported with, by the wiles of a finished coquette.

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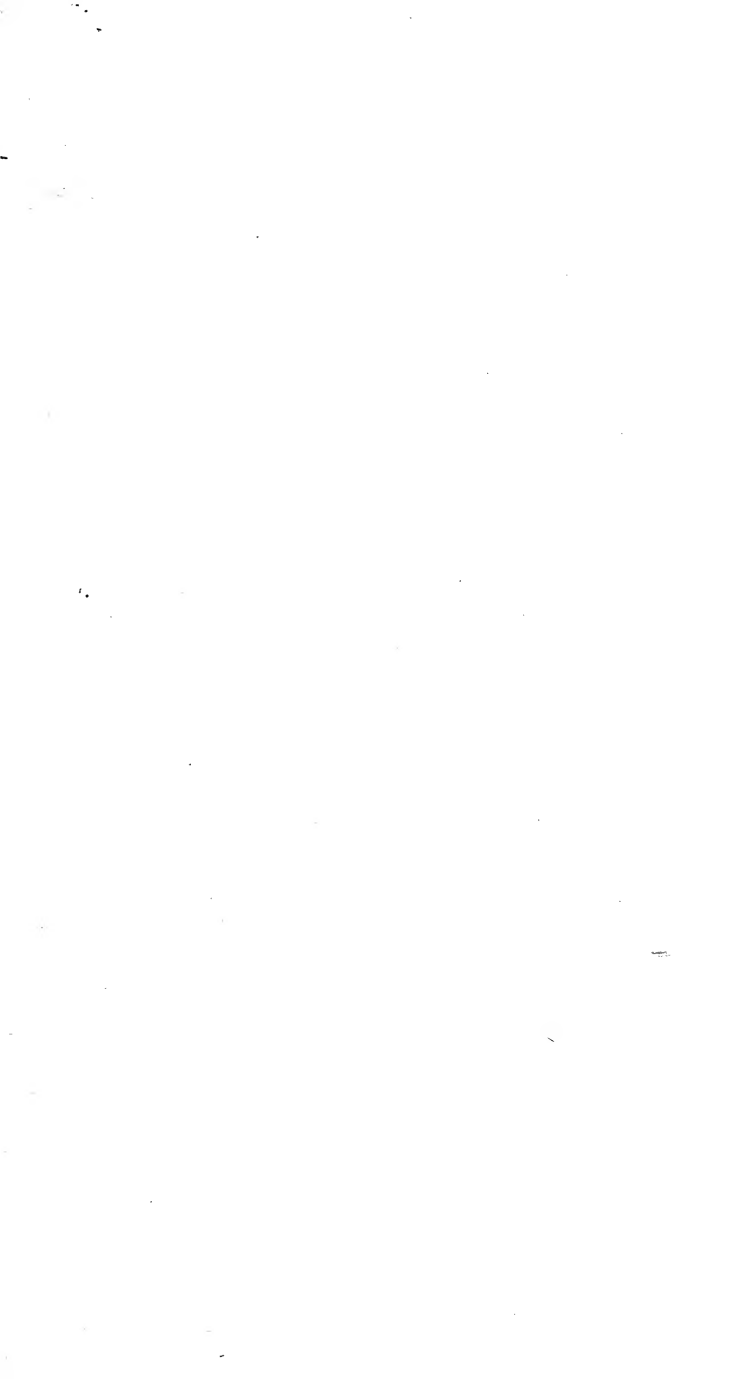
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